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Abstract

Author: EDMONDSON John James William

Title: A History of the Regional Theological Courses and an Evaluation of their Effectiveness in the Initial Training of the Clergy of the Church of England.

Degree: PhD in Theology, 2003

The purpose of this thesis is firstly to provide a co-ordinated history of the development of the network of Regional Theological Courses which has grown, since the founding of the Southwark Ordination Course in 1960, to a position where by 2000 the network was providing part-time training for about half of the ordinands of the Church of England. Secondly there is a critical assessment of the effectiveness of these Courses both relative to the more traditional Theological Colleges and having regard to the work of those ordained and in parochial ministry.

The thesis draws heavily on unpublished primary source documentation from the archives of the Courses, together with interviews with key personnel and a survey of those who have trained on the Courses, their subsequent supervisors and diocesan Bishops.

Chapters 1 and 2 describe the development of the Courses from 1960-1979 and Chapter 3 is about the watershed of 1979 when unexpectedly all the Courses were validated for training Stipendiary as well as Non-Stipendiary clergy. Chapter 4 introduces critical questions raised by key interviewees and Chapter 5 describes further interviews with current Course Principals. The period from 1979 to 2000 is covered by Chapter 6 which describes central Reports and debates and Chapters 7-10 which show the development of the individual Courses in the Regions. Selected curriculum issues are raised in Chapter 11 and this is followed by the results of the Survey of Bishops in Chapter 12, of Supervisory Clergy in Chapter 13 and of Past Students in Chapter 14. Chapter 15 lists conclusions and recommendations.

Further information from the surveys that is not included in the main text has been provided as supplementary material.



A History of the Regional Theological Courses and an Evaluation of their
Effectiveness in the Initial Training of the Clergy of the Church of England.

2 volumes: Volume 1

by
The Rev John James William Edmondson

Submitted for the degree of
PhD in Theology

University of Durham: Department of Theology

2003

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1 2 MAR 2004

Table of Contents

Volume 1

Abstract of thesis	p. 1
List of tables included in the text	p. 4
Note on supplementary material	p. 7
Declaration of originality and statement of copyright	p. 8
List of Abbreviations	p. 9
Preface	p. 11
Chapter 1: The Beginnings of Part-time Training in the Modern Church of England	p. 13
Chapter 2: The Initial Phase of Course Development 1970-79	p. 32
Chapter 3: The Watershed of 1979	p. 63
Chapter 4: An Introduction to Critical Questions	p. 72
Chapter 5: Interviews with Principals	p. 84
Chapter 6: Central Church Reports and Debates 1979-2000	p. 95
Chapter 7: Development of Individual Courses 1979-2000; the North and South-West	p.126
Chapter 8: Development of Individual Courses 1979-2000; London and the South East	p.171
Chapter 9: Development of Individual Courses 1979-2000; The Midlands and West	p.213
Chapter 10: Development of Individual Courses 1979-2000; The South and East	p.242
Chapter 11: Curriculum Issues	p.266
Chapter 12: Survey of Opinions of Bishops about the Courses	p.287
Chapter 13: Survey of Opinions of Supervisory Clergy about the Courses	p.307
Chapter 14: Survey of Past Students	p.337
Chapter 15: Conclusions and Recommendations	p.398

Volume 2

Contents	p.422
Appendix: The 54 recommendations of ACCM 30	p.423
Bibliographies: 1 – Books	p.428
2 – Reports and Pamphlets published by the Church of England	p.432
3 – Unpublished Primary Source Materials	p.438
Supplementary Survey data relating to Chapter 12 – Bishops	p.453
Chapter 13 – Supervisory Clergy	p.475
Chapter 14 – Students	p.501

List of Tables Contained Within the Text

(Note that the reference numbers refer firstly to the chapter of the text and secondly to the table number within that chapter.)

1/1	Chart showing the Chronology of the Regional Theological Courses described in this thesis	p. 14
2/1	Total students in training on the Courses, 1973	p. 34
2/2	Appendix E from GS303, 1976	p. 38
5/1	Details of interviews undertaken [with Principals]	p. 84
6/1	Total numbers in training on the Regional Courses (1980-2000)	p. 97
6/2	Approved fees for theological Colleges and Courses (1982/3)	p.101
8/1	SEITE students, 2000	p.179
8/2	OHMTC students, 1988/89	p.205
11/1	Structure: Diploma and MA in Theological and Pastoral Studies (extract from EMMTC Validation document, 2001)	p.273
11/2	Modular Structure of the Three Year Course (extract from WEMTC Validation document, 1997)	p.274
12/1	Rating of Course Training relative to College Training by Bishops	p.296
13/1	Relationship of Course to College Training by Subject area (supervisory clergy)	p.313
13/2	Percentage comparison between Bishops and Supervisory clergy (in rating Course to College training by subject area)	p.314
13/3	Overall rating of Course training relative to College training (by Bishops and Supervisory clergy)	p.316
13/4	Differentiation between the Regional Courses by Supervisory clergy	p.317
13/5	Preparation for posts of senior responsibility (assessment of Supervisory clergy)	p.318
13/6	Notable Competences in Course-trained individuals (assessment by Supervisory clergy)	p.329
13/7	Notable Problems in Course-trained individuals (assessment by Supervisory clergy)	p.330
13/8	Principle Strengths of Regional Course training (assessment by Supervisory clergy)	p.331
13/9	Principal weaknesses of Regional Course training (assessment by Supervisory clergy)	p.332
13/10	Other issues concerning training on Courses (raised by Supervisory clergy)	p.333
14/1	Student Survey: Course Comparisons Question 6: General feelings about the training experience	p.345
14/2	Student Survey league Table of Current Courses Question 6: General feelings about the training experience	p.346
14/3 (i)	Student Survey: Course Comparison Question 10, Overall ratings of Courses by students (analysis by subject area)	p.351

14/3 (ii)	Question 10 – Overall Numbers saying ‘less than reasonable’ i.e. negative ratings	p.353
14/4	Student Survey: league Table of all Courses based on all parts of the curriculum investigated.	p.356
14/5	To what are (students’) general feelings about the training experience most closely related?	p.358
14/6 (i)	Student Survey: Course Comparison. Question 10, in depth knowledge of the Bible	p.361
14/6 (ii)	Student Survey: League Table of Current Courses Question 10, in depth knowledge of the Bible	p.362
14/7 (i)	Student Survey: Course Comparison. Question 10: General Academic Theology	p.363
14/7 (ii)	Student Survey: League Table of Current Courses. Question 10: General Academic Theology	p.364
14/8 (i)	Student Survey: Course Comparison Question 12: Compatibility with Educational Needs	p.367
14/8 (ii)	Student Survey: League Table of Current Courses Question 12: Compatibility with Educational Needs	p.368
14/9 (i)	Student Survey: Course Comparison Question 11: Coping with Demands of the Course Time-Wise	p.370
14/9 (ii)	Student Survey: League Table of Current Courses Question 11: Coping with Demands of the Course Time-Wise	p.371
14/10 (i)	Student Survey: Course Comparison Question 10: Personal Growth in the Life of Prayer	p.373
14/10 (ii)	Student Survey: League Table of Current Courses Question 10: Personal Growth in the Life of Prayer.	p.374
14/11 (i)	Student Survey: Course Comparison Question 10: Training in Mission Awareness and Skills	p.377
14/11 (ii)	Student Survey: League Table of Current Courses Question 10: Training in Mission Awareness and Skills	p.378
14/12 (i)	Student Survey: Course Comparison Question 15: Churchmanship Support	p.382
14/12 (ii)	Student Survey: Course Comparison Question 15: Churchmanship Support. Proportion of respondents feeling particularly supported or threatened	p.383
14/12 (iii)	Student Survey: League Table of Current Courses Question 15: Churchmanship Support	p.384
14/12 (iv)	Churchmanship of those (students) feeling particularly supported by their Course	p.385
14/12 (v)	Churchmanship of those (students) feeling particularly threatened by their Course	p.388
14/13 (i)	Student Survey: Course Comparison Question 18: Numbers of those feeling less well equipped for ministry than those trained at College	p.391
14/13 (ii)	Student Survey: Course Comparison Question 18: Equipment for ministry relative to those trained at Colleges	p.392
14/13 (iii)	Student Survey: League Table of Current Courses Question 18: Equipment for Ministry relative to those trained at Colleges	p.393

14/14 (i)	Student Survey: Course Comparison Question 19: Given your time again which would you opt for? (Numbers saying 'College')	p.394
14/14 (ii)	Student Survey: League Table Showing Percentage of Students who Trained on current Courses who would rather choose a residential College 'given their time again'	p.395

In addition the *pro forma* survey documents may be found as follows:

for Bishops	p.289
for Supervisory Clergy	p.308
for Former Students	p.339

Supplementary Material

The surveys which have provided the evidence for Chapters 12, 13 and 14 were extensive in their scope and resulted in much information which it has not been possible to include in the main text.

As much as possible of the information contained on the individual returns has been tabulated and the results are included as supplementary information, bound at the end of Volume 2. Certain analyses, again not included in the main text, are also included.

Declaration

None of the material contained in this thesis has previously been submitted for a degree in the University of Durham or any other university. It is based on the sole research of the author.

Statement of Copyright

The copyright of this thesis rests with the author. No quotation from it should be published without their prior written consent and information derived from it should be acknowledged.

Standard Abbreviations used in the text

ABM	Advisory Board of Ministry
ACCM	Advisory Council for the Church's Ministry
APM	Auxiliary Pastoral Ministry
CACTM	The Church's Advisory Council for the Ministry
CATS	Credit Accumulation and Transfer System
CBDTI	Carlisle and Blackburn Diocesan Training Institute
CDTI	Carlisle Diocesan Training Institute
CME	Continuing Ministerial Education
CNAA	Council for National Academic Awards
C of E	Church of England
CSM	Canterbury School of Ministry
DDO	Diocesan Director of Ordinands
EAMTC	East Anglian Ministerial Training Course
EMJOTS	East Midlands Joint Ordination Training Scheme
EMMTC	East Midlands Ministry Training Course
GME	General Ministerial Examination
LEP	Local Ecumenical Project
LNSM	Local Non-Stipendiary Minister / Ministry
LOM	Locally Ordained Minister
MSE	Minister in Secular Employment
MTS	Ministry Training Scheme (particularly of St. Albans Diocese)
NEOC	North East Ordination Course
NEOC	North East Oecumenical Course
NOC	Northern Ordination Course
NSM	Non-Stipendiary Minister / Ministry
NSP	Non-Stipendiary Priest
NTMTC	North Thames Ministerial Training Course
NWOC	North West Ordination Course
OHMTC	Oak Hill Ministerial Training Course
OLM	Ordained Local Minister / Ministry
OMC	Oxford Ministry Course
OPTET	Oxford Partnership on Theological Education and Training
SA[D]MTS	St. Albans Diocese Ministry Training Scheme
SAOMC	St. Albans and Oxford Ministry Course
SDMTS	Southern Dioceses Ministerial Training Scheme
SEITE	South East Institute for Theological Education
SOC	Southwark Ordination Course
STETS	Southern Theological Education Training Scheme
STS	Southern Training Scheme for Christian Ministry
SWMTC	South West Ministerial Training Course
URC	United Reformed Church
WEMTC	West of England Ministerial Training Course
WMMTC	West Midlands Ministerial Training Course

ACCM 22	ACCM Occasional paper No. 22, 'Education for the Church's Ministry. The Report of the Working Party on Assessment', 1987.
ACCM 30	ACCM Occasional Paper No. 30, 'Ordination Training on Courses. The Report of the Working Party on the Structure and Finance of Theological Courses', 1989.
The Hereford Report	C of E individual title, "Theological Colleges – The Next Steps. Report of the Assessment Group on Theological Colleges," 1993.
The Lincoln Report	GSMisc 401, 'Theological Training: A Way Ahead. A Report to the House of Bishops of the Church of England on Theological Colleges and Courses', 1992.
Mission and Ministry	C of E individual title, 'Mission and Ministry. The Churches' Validation Framework for Theological Education', 1999.

Preface

The writer first became interested in the subject-matter of this thesis through a conversation with the Rev Sister Eileen Wheeler who was at the time serving as his curate at St. Mark's Church, Bexhill-on-Sea. Before her ordination Sister Eileen had acted as a local tutor on the part-time Regional Theological Course then serving Chichester Diocese (SDMTS). It became apparent to the writer that there were many differences between this method of training and his own experience of residential theological college which were worthy of further research and appraisal.

The thrust of the research has been two-fold. In the first instance extensive reference has been made to unpublished files and records held in the archives of the Regional Courses. These have been used in connection with published Church reports to build up an integrated history of the Courses, something which has not previously been attempted, to the writer's knowledge. Secondly, a survey was conducted of past students, their supervisors when in parishes, and their Bishops, in an effort to evaluate the Courses' effectiveness.

Thanks are due to the many hundreds of people who have contributed to the research programme. In particular I am grateful to the following Principals of the Courses for their willingness to be interviewed and for the extensive access to primary source materials which was in most cases allowed: Rev Canon Tim Herbert (CBDTI); Rev Dr Richard Clutterbuck (WEMTC); Rev Dr Chris Burdon (NOC); Rev Dr Malcolm Brown (EAMTC); Rev Dr David Holgate (acting Principal, STETS); Rev Dr Dennis Stamps (WMMTC); Rev Dr Mike Butterworth (SAOMC);

Rev Canon Trevor Pitt (NEOC); Rev Michael Taylor (EMMTC); Rev Dr David Hewlett (SWMTC); Brother Patrick Moore (Assistant Principal, SEITE); Rev David Sceats (NTMTC). The Diocesan Bishops who responded to the questionnaire, or who asked a member of staff to respond on their behalf are listed in Chapter 12. I am grateful to all of them for their time and trouble as well as to the 1007 Course-trained clergy and 210 other clergy who have supervised them in some capacity, all of whom also responded. Next I must thank Dr Sheridan Gilley for his expert guidance and supervision throughout the project and for his critical appraisal of my draft thesis. Finally my thanks are due to the Parochial Church Council of St. Mark's Church, Bexhill for their sponsorship and to my family for their patience, understanding, and practical help. In particular my wife Jill was of enormous help in investigating and copying archive materials and my son John undertook all necessary word processing.

Chapter 1: The Beginnings of Part-time Training in the Modern Church of England

Today about half of the ordinands of the Church of England are trained through a part-time mode of training which has developed rapidly over the past forty years, and especially since 1979. During the same period the attendance at the once universal residential Theological Colleges has declined dramatically. The Regional Theological Courses have grown in attendance partly due to perceived educational advantages and partly due to the recurring problem of the higher cost of training at Colleges. The training received on a Course is different from that received at a College. Typically the average inspection process of an individual institution has suggested developments which might take place to improve that institution only, based on the observations of a small team of inspectors at a given time. By contrast this thesis seeks to relate the training received on Courses to that received in Colleges and the needs of the ordained parochial minister, on a much wider basis. By describing the differences which have developed between the Courses, along with an assessment of their strengths and weaknesses, it is hoped to inform future policy about ordination training in the Church of England, at a time of continuing change.

Of course, neither part-time training nor training for ordained ministry in a local context is new in the Church of England. For example, in the early seventeenth century a relative of the writer's wife, the Rev Samuel Fairclough, 1594-1677, undertook post-ordination professional studies at a household seminary

Table 1/1 : Chronology of the Regional Theological Courses

1960	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	1970	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	2000
<div> <div>Southwark Ordination Course (SOC)</div> <div> <div>South East Institute for Theological Education (SEITE)</div> <div>Canterbury School of Ministry (CSM)</div> </div> </div>																				
<div> <div>North West Ordination Course (NWOC)</div> <div> <div>West Midlands</div> <div> <div>Supplementary Ministry Course</div> <div>Gloucester Theological Course</div> </div> </div> </div>																				
<div> <div>Northern Ordination Course (NOC)</div> <div> <div>West Midlands Ministerial Training Course (WMMTC)</div> <div> <div>"and Hereford" West of England (WEMTC)</div> <div>Gloucester School for Ministry</div> </div> </div> </div>																				
<div> <div>Oak Hill Auxiliary Pastoral Ministry Course</div> <div> <div>Oak Hill Non-Stipendiary Ministry Course</div> <div>Oxford Diocese Auxiliary Pastoral Ministry Course</div> </div> </div>																				
<div> <div>St Albans Diocese Ministry Training Scheme</div> <div> <div>Oak Hill Ministerial Training Course</div> <div>Oxford Ministry Course (OMC)</div> </div> </div>																				
<div> <div>St Albans and Oxford Ministry Course (SAOMC)</div> <div> <div>East Midlands Joint Ordination Training Scheme (EMJOTS)</div> <div>East Midlands Ministry Training Course (EMMTC)</div> </div> </div>																				
<div> <div>Southern Dioceses Ministerial Training Scheme (SDMTS)</div> <div> <div>Southern Training Scheme for Christian Ministry (STCS)</div> <div>Southern Theological Education Training Scheme (STETS)</div> </div> </div>																				
<div> <div>North East Ordination Course (NEOC)</div> <div> <div>East Anglian Ministerial Training Scheme</div> <div>East Anglian Ministerial Training Course (EAMTC)</div> </div> </div>																				
<div> <div>Exeter/Torquay Non-Stipendiary Ministry Scheme</div> <div> <div>South West Ministerial Training Course (SWMTC)</div> <div>Carlisle Diocesan Training Institute (CDTI)</div> </div> </div>																				
<div> <div>Carlisle and Blackburn Diocesan Training Institute (CBDTI)</div> </div>																				
1960	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	1970	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	2000

under the guidance of a local tutor, Mr Richard Blackerby of Ashen in Essex.¹ Much later, in 1876, Kings College London launched a three year course of evening studies in response to the ‘numerous applications received from young men engaged in various professions who are desirous of entering Holy Orders but are unable to give up for so long a period as two years the work by which they maintain themselves’.² These however are examples from different eras and this thesis concerns the network of Regional Courses which developed in stages from 1960 to the end of the twentieth century, to offer an alternative form of training to the Colleges. The scope of the institutions considered, together with their approximate dates and relationships is illustrated by the bar chart at table 1/1. Inevitably it is necessary to make comparisons between the Regional Courses and the Colleges but in doing so it is valuable to remember that the Colleges themselves were largely the development of only the previous century and that both forms of institution represent but two strands in a larger picture of theological education within the Church of England which has been subject to continuing development.

In 1960 the pathfinding Southwark Ordination Course was founded. From its inception it was intended that the Course should be available to train for ordination those whose future ministry would be within the sphere in which they were already working. However although, as will be shown, the Church of England had had various voices calling for creating a category of ordained ministry which was ‘Non-Stipendiary’, it was to be another ten years before this was to become established. Meanwhile, there had been an earlier experiment of a pioneering nature

¹ Full life history to be found in Samuel Clarke, *The Lives of Sundry Eminent Persons in this Later Age* (London, Thomas Simmons, 1683), pp. 153-192. Note that in this volume there are several repeats of page numbers.

² David Dowland, *Nineteenth-Century Anglican Theological Training* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1997), pp. 192-3.

in the post-war Church which although not of lasting success was perhaps the first venture away from the stipendiary norm which was both noted by those responsible for framing the parameters of the later-established Non-Stipendiary Ministry, and had been also cited by those who have commented on the most appropriate training styles for non-traditional ministries.

The history of the Worker – Priest movement has been recently clearly documented by John Mantle.³ In a post war society in which the Church of England was seen as very distant from the mass of the country's working people, this movement was marked by a small number of traditionally trained priests who felt called to bridge that gulf by going and working alongside those among whom they were seeking to share the Gospel.

The distinctive ethos of those involved in this radical and pioneering ministry is summed up by the Worker Church Group statement on the Meaning of Evangelism, quoted by Mantle. This makes it clear that for them evangelism started with showing the love of God. They felt bound to 'express this spirit of love by becoming one with the workers'.⁴ The Worker Priest movement was a small movement which did not enjoy widespread success. The principal individuals participating in the post-war period were all trained conventionally at theological colleges. Yet as one practical outworking of the general idea that the Church ought somehow to get alongside the working classes, it was one of the contributing influences to the establishment of alternative, part-time, means of theological training for ordination. Certainly Bishop Mervyn Stockwood, in setting up the

³ John Mantle, *Britain's first Worker-Priests* (London, SCM, 2000).

⁴ Mantle, *Worker-Priests*, p.287.

Southwark Ordination Course, hoped that men from artisan backgrounds would form a significant proportion of its students.

The analysis made by the Worker-Priest movement's latter-day historian, John Mantle, of the part-time style of theological education which came to be adopted for the training of new generations of Non-Stipendiary, or self-supporting ministers, is highly critical. Whereas many have seen an obvious connection between part-time training and so-called part-time ministry, Mantle argued instead that any new, even radical, pattern of ministry requires not less, but more, theological acumen on the part of its participants, in order to foster its success. Hence his profound criticism, here printed in full:⁵

Today, however, there are those who argue that the training is everywhere better. But the truth is that it is a *different* training producing a very *different* ministry. What were once seen as the core subjects on a theological curriculum, for example critical biblical, theological and historical work, are sometimes deliberately shortened and subsumed, almost hidden under a list of broad and acceptable outcomes. On regional or local courses especially, the initial study of the Bible (to take but one example) is sometimes completed in a fraction of the time students once spent engaged with the text. For students without much academic background or experience in dealing with textual work, this could prove disabling, if not disastrous. It doesn't always help, when in an attempt to make up for this, such coursework is 'made relevant' by subsuming it under all manner of associated headings or by feeding the students the very connecting points with life, faith and other disciplines that it was once assumed they would search out for themselves. Creativity is essential in the design of any course, but it simply cannot make up for the reduction in contact time between learner and teacher and text, and the sheer lack of exposure to so much in-depth historical critical work. The word 'rigour' is a favourite word to use in course design, but it is perhaps not always used with rigour itself, and it is little wonder that some of the church's own documents question the amount of study of traditional theological disciplines, admitting to '...uncertainty about the quality and depth of a candidate's engagement with the traditions of the church'. Though the numbers of ordinands were apparently 'rising' at the turn of the millennium, the pool of biblical, historical and theological comprehension may be ever shrinking. It is possible to argue that though more and more people are being trained for ministry, fewer and fewer are being helped to grasp in

⁵ Mantle, *Worker-Priests*, p.278.

any real depth the building blocks that will help them engage with a sophisticated and fragmented society.

It is indeed very hard to see that the Church as a whole is yet making any significant progress in alleviating the trend of reducing numbers of Church members in the increasingly 'sophisticated and fragmented' society to which Mantle refers. The assertion that the Church's ordained ministry currently encompasses the tension of an increasing pool of numbers (due to those ordained as Non-Stipendiary Ministers) but a decreasing pool of biblical historical and theological comprehension is a brave formulation of the thoughts that many have expressed, that modern part-time training is somehow simply less adequate than the traditional collegiate pattern. In later chapters this assertion, along with the opposite assertion that the new model is the best possible, will be carefully evaluated.

The establishment of the Southwark Ordination Course in 1960 by the then Bishop, Mervyn Stockwood, and his suffragan, John Robinson, was a watershed development in the training of Church of England clergy. Melinsky⁶ cites the main practical reason for the setting up of the Course as being the acknowledgement of the harm done to married men's families by their uprooting to go to a residential setting. He says that it was also hoped to earth theology in the realities of the working world and declares that the experiment was successful. Mantle, however, is more measured when he states about those training to exercise an ordained ministry in their place of work:⁷

...on the one hand it was a response to a shortage of money and manpower; on the other, a way of 'engaging with the workaday world'. From the outset it had been the intention of Stockwood to train some kind of indigenous ministry. Judged by this intention SOC was clearly a success. But if Stockwood had hoped for workers from an industrial setting who would remain on the shop floor after ordination, he was to

⁶ M.A.H. Melinsky, *The Shape of the Ministry*, (Norwich, Canterbury Press, 1992), p.253.

⁷ Mantle, *Worker-Priests*, p.209.

be sadly disappointed. Virtually no shop-floor workers came anywhere near the SOC course.

This latter assertion is justified by a list of SOC ordinands which he quotes from perhaps 1982.⁸ Of 54 people quoted, only two could be described as ‘workers’.

Canon Eric James, writing in 1986,⁹ gives more details concerning the vision for the founding of the Course, and also an even more cutting criticism:

The goals of S.O.C. – in no order of priority – were to do something about:

1. The crisis in ordained manpower which loomed ahead.
2. The financial crisis which was likely to make it impossible for at least some dioceses to have all the paid full-time ordained manpower they might want.
3. The class-structure of the ordained ministry – which undoubtedly played a considerable part in the failure of the Mission of the Church of England to the whole of society.
4. The unscriptural separation between ordained and lay ministry.
5. The serious ignoring of women’s ministry.
6. The divisions of the Church manifested in the training of clergy of the C. of E. by themselves.
7. A model of “recruitment” for ordained ministry which tended to wait for individuals to perceive their vocation rather than the other New Testament model of the local church taking thought as to how it should raise up local ministry.
8. The failure to make use of secular work experience and the context of work and home as the raw material of theological thinking.

Alas! After a dozen years Southwark had not achieved half its goals.

From such documentation as still exists from the Church of England Records Office, covering the pioneering decade of the Course, the earliest material is a paper written by Bishop John Robinson¹⁰ in February 1960, that is some seven months before the first intake of students. In it he introduced three classes of men

⁸ Mantle, *Worker-Priests*, p.291.

⁹ Article, ‘In the Beginning ...’, in Bryan G.E. Pettifer (ed), *Growing into Ministry* (St. Albans, St Albans Diocese Ministerial Training Scheme, 1986), p.7.

¹⁰ John Woolwich, paper: ‘Southwark Ordination Training Scheme’, dated February 1960 in C of E Records Office file ACCM/COURSE/SWO/1.

who, if accepted for ordination, required training different from the normal residential pattern. The first consisted of those preparing for full-time ministry who found it impossible or impractical for family or financial reasons to attend theological college. The second was those in secular employment who wished to continue their ministry, once ordained, in the same workplace. The third was said to consist of younger graduate ordinands who wanted to do part of their training in the industrial world.

The requirements of the Course were described under the categories of ‘Academic’ and ‘Pastoral and Devotional’. The shortened General Ordination Examination course for those aged between thirty and forty was taken as the academic standard required and it was proposed to achieve this by a development of the pattern of adult education evening lectures then already given at Southwark Cathedral Chapter House. There were to be three years of three terms each with lectures being given two nights per week on the following topics:

First Year	Old Testament	24 lectures
	Religious Life and Thought Since 1800	24 lectures
Second Year	New Testament	24 lectures
	Christian Doctrine	24 lectures
Third Year	Biblical Theology	24 lectures
	Liturgy	12 lectures
	Apologetics	12 lectures

These were to be supplemented by written work in the autumn and spring terms and tutorials or seminars in the summer. The pastoral and devotional requirements were to be met under a common discipline and rule of life consisting of a week-end together once a month, an annual retreat and an annual fortnight’s summer school –

to be supplemented by extra provision at the end of the course still to be properly defined. The Bishop hoped for 'a considerable response from men with professional, technical and industrial experience who are ready to serve the Church in the ordained ministry but who till now have been unable to see the possibility of training for it, or, if desirable, of combining it with their present vocation'. He stressed that the scheme was 'primarily concerned with the training of men without taking them out of the world'.

As thus conceived, the Southwark Ordination course set a pattern of training which is recognizable to this day as a norm in the world of part-time training, with its combination of midweek classes, residential weekends and summer schools and a syllabus which broadly reflected that of a Theological College, albeit with far less contact available between student and tutors.

In an article for the *Church Times* headed 'A Theological College without walls' and dated autumn 1960,¹¹ Bishop Robinson declared that the new Southwark Course was 'clearly a phenomenon of some significance for the future. Indeed... it could presage a silent revolution in the whole pattern of theological education'.

By 1962 the printed Course prospectus,¹² showed that supplementary lectures had been added in the (a) History of the early Church and the Church in England before the eighteenth Century. (b) Anglican Formularies, and (c) The Book of Common Prayer. In that year, the first formal inspection by the Church's Advisory Council for the Ministry (CACTM) took place.

¹¹ In C of E Records Office file ACCM/COURSE/SWO/1.

¹² In C of E Records Office file ACCM/COURSE/SWO/1.

The first Inspection Report¹³ comprises a fairly short document which describes the infant Southwark Ordination Course in only the second year of operation. In their conclusion, the inspectors commended the Course strongly and hoped 'that this courageous experiment will receive every encouragement'. They were impressed by the feeling of fellowship engendered among the students and by easy relationships between students and diocesan staff. However, it is obvious that there were some reservations about evening lectures. Lack of contact time with tutors was pointed out, as was the 'slenderness' of the Biblical teaching, whilst the tiredness of students was also obvious: 'there are limits to what a man can take in when he has already done a day's work'. It is interesting that in spite of the considerable development of the Regional Theological Courses over the past few years, no-one has been able adequately to satisfy these first critical questions raised.

The supplementary inspection report of November 1964¹⁴ contains the startling revelation that the first year intake now only included two candidates from Southwark Diocese, the remainder being from Guildford, Chelmsford, London and Rochester. This was interpreted at the time as making it clear 'that this course of training is meeting a wide need in the whole Church', but no-one said what was also true, that the figures made somewhat of a mockery of Bishop Robinson's 1960 statement in the *Church Times* that the Course must 'on any count... be reckoned a major breakthrough in recruitment'. In June 1965 the Diocesan Bishops meeting at Lambeth decided to accord full recognition to the Southwark Ordination Course, and this was confirmed by letter on 8 July.¹⁵

¹³ In C of E Records Office file ACCM/COURSE/SWO/1.

¹⁴ In C of E Records Office file ACCM/COURSE/SWO/1.

¹⁵ In C of E Records Office file ACCM/COURSE/SWO/1.

The second Inspection Report, dated Spring 1968,¹⁶ made it clear that examinations were an integral part of the Course, as candidates sat for the London Diploma in Biblical and Religious Studies. Again, the lack of contact time with lecturers was noted. An experiment with the seminar system was criticized as ‘simply an exchange of opinions without much injection of knowledge’. Essays produced by students were described generally as ‘of good “O” level but not “A” level or University standard’. By contrast the summer school was highly praised in nearly every aspect. Although the inspectors concluded that the Course was “a remarkably worthwhile experiment”, one cannot help but feel from their comments that while the residential aspects were successful, the bulk of the part-time aspects were the subject of far greater reservation. Again the problem of student tiredness on weekday evenings was highlighted. An additional issue raised was that while the ethos of the Course was not to separate the student from real life, the side effect of the pattern of training might be to separate a married man from his family far more than the traditional pattern of residential training would ever do. The Course was said to be in this respect, ‘clearly not a soft option’.

At about the same time as the second inspection was taking place, the Advisory Council for the Church’s Ministry undertook a survey of former Southwark students with a view to informing proposals to set up similar courses in other parts of the country. In response to the request to write detailed answers suggesting the strengths and weaknesses of their training under a number of different headings, some 24 replies were received. From these gathered responses¹⁷

¹⁶ In C of E Records Office file ACCM/CTE/COURSE/16.

¹⁷ In C of E Records Office file ACCM/CTE/COURSE/16.

an insight can be gained into life on S.O.C. during the years 1964-7. Commenting on gaining basic theological information, student 'H' stated:

Basically this was from the University of London extension lectures. The lecturers were first class, prepared their material well and kept to the point, making the most of the limited time available. But because of this limited time questions and discussion were limited – students and lecturers alike being anxious to catch trains at the end of the session. Time for reading was limited... There was very little opportunity of discussing essays with the lecturers and some did not even make comments on the work when handing it back. The examinations at the end of each session placed an enormous strain on us... the approach to the subject became a “cram” rather than learning.

Student 'X' summed up by saying, 'In this, as in other fields the fundamental problems were of time and strain.'

If gaining theological information at Southwark was a weakness, the learning of the process of theological thought was very much assessed as a strength. Student 'W' was typical when he assessed the Course as 'of immense value in that one is never for very long away from the pressures of daily living... The implications of the gospel for the world were worked out in discussion with reference to the world from which we came; ethical precepts were illustrated – and sometimes challenged – by reference to problems we actually encountered in both our personal and our working lives.'

Many students spoke of the intense pressure placed upon family life by a husband effectively absent due to pressures of time. However, there was favourable comparison with the alternative pattern of the day, i.e. that the husband should attend Theological College by himself for two years, leaving his family with very meagre financial provision. Student 'T' spoke of reality rather than idealism when he said:

Part-time Courses (and sometimes part-time ministry) seem to me to be saving money at the expense of the employer and the student if it is intended to train men thoroughly. Many students leave the Course

because of the strain, we began with 26 and ended with 11. Somehow I feel, the Church must find the money to maintain older men and their families whilst the men are training. Many of those who were trained on S.O.C. were skating on very thin ice with their employers and kept their training secret from them, particularly those employed by private firms.

There was also intense pressure on the student. 'O' wrote, 'I think that time for reflection, quiet, assimilation of studies was and must be the biggest problem for a S.O.C. man. One got rather envious when one paid an occasional visit to a residential college...'. 'W' said 'Finding time and opportunity for meditation and assimilation was a perpetual conflict between the demands of training and the need for sleep'. On a slightly different tack, 'X' said of residential periods, 'If the lecturer was good (as he almost always was) the whole thing was worth while. If he was bad, then the extreme pressure of time was felt all the more and one was constantly aware of all the things one could have been doing.'

In 1969, a Working Party was set up to carry out a ten year review of S.O.C. Thirty students then present on the Course were asked for their personal evaluation of their experiences.¹⁸ The replies were characterised by a deep appreciation both that the part-time kind of training existed at all and also of the Principal's self-sacrificing contributions to the Course. That said, the experience of the students seems to have indicated widespread difficulties, as the following excerpts from the summary document illustrate:-

1. “The relevance of the training to the kind of ministry you yourself want to offer in the future”
Again and again people wrote that insufficient time was given over to training for “dealing with people” and that the real issues of the world today were scarcely touched upon.
2. “The worship of the course (a) in the Wychcroft Chapel”
... too rigid.
“(b) in the Cathedral”
Those who commented on this, with one exception, expressed disappointment of one sort or another.
3. “The supervision of your life with regard to:

¹⁸ In C of E Records Office file ACCM/COLL/COU/SWO.

(a) Your spiritual life”

Apart from one student all those who commented were critical, some almost bitterly so

(b) “your theological instruction.”

Opinion was very strongly divided here.

4. “The Chapter House lectures and their teaching methods”
... the course given by was felt to be almost a total waste of time.
5. “The teaching methods and content of the weekends and summer schools.”
The general criticism was that too many lectures were unprepared.
6. “The examination system”
The majority... felt that a well structured essay scheme would give a much better guide to ability
7. “The general administration of the Course.”
Everyone felt that the existing arrangements were good.
8. “Organisation of the weekends and Summer Schools, particularly from the point of view of making the best use of very limited time.”
Only one student expressed himself as being happy with this.
... too much wasted time.
9. “The value of your tutor”
Most reply with the words “nil” or “valueless”.
10. “The training provided by the Course for your wife and family.”
This raised no great passion.
11. “The reaction of your wife ... The strains imposed on your family.”
Everyone felt that the first year was a great strain on their families.
12. “The social occasions and fellowship amongst the students”
Student fellowship on the Course was universally felt to be very strong.
13. “The main gaps and weaknesses in the Course.”
All those who commented here returned to the themes of:-
 - (i) Absence of guidance in spiritual life
 - (ii) Lack of tutorials
 - (iii) Insufficient application to the current problems of society and weakness on the pastoral side.
 - (iv) More experiment needed in all fields.

It seems as if the S.O.C. had succeeded in its first ten years in developing an efficient system of administration and in inculcating a strong sense of fellowship among those engaged in a common endeavour, but that virtually everything else in the setting and method of the Course was experienced as being decidedly lacking.

Following the Ten Year Review, the Working Party's Report, published in February 1970,¹⁹ on the one hand in paragraph 33 stated, 'we have been given no reason to suppose that the standard of those who satisfactorily complete SOC is lower than that of those completing residential courses.' Yet on the other hand a list of no fewer than forty-eight separate recommendations was made as constituting desirable developments! A private letter from ACCM's Board of Theological Education Secretary to the Chairman of the Working Party, Professor Maurice Wiles, dated 23 March 1970,²⁰ is in turn critical of the report:

The second point is the sensitivity over the quality of the course. Accepting that it is undoubtedly a course of high quality, what precisely is the difference between it and the residential courses? i.e. the other theological colleges. Is it simply, as you suggest in paragraph 16, that because there is less time, less quantity of material can be tackled? Does this matter? And in what way does this matter? Because, surely, the answer to these questions partly determine who should come to such a course, though I realise the factors about maturity and so on are important considerations. Of course, if it does not matter about quantity and the length of time, then let us reduce the theological college courses!

Perhaps Canon Eric James, already quoted, was publishing words which were only too true when he wrote, 'Alas! After a dozen years Southwark had not achieved half its goals!'

Of course it is possible for any report whose principal purpose is to recommend improvements to an institution to appear unduly negative if taken as a simple description of the then present state of that institution. Nevertheless the joint evidence of reports, surveys and private opinion does seem to indicate that, good an experiment as Southwark was, after ten years the Course still had very many criticisms to address if its advantages were to be exploited to the full and an

¹⁹ In C of E Records Office file ACCM/COURSE/SWO/3.

²⁰ In C of E Records Office file ACCM/COLL/COU/SWO.

equivalent alternative provided to traditional residential Theological College training. Over the next thirty years, there were to be many new Regional Theological Courses founded and many developments of content and method adopted in response to a most positive consideration of the Church's principal concerns and issues in the field of theological education, many of which were introduced in the prologue. The question would be whether the advantages of the new form of part-time Course could be properly exploited whilst minimising the disadvantages, or whether the disadvantages as highlighted in the first ten years of Southwark's experience were in fact to prove endemic.

One of the developments in the ordained ministry which Southwark made it possible to train for was for those intending an ordained ministry in their continuing place of work. In the first decade of SOC, this took place very much on an ad-hoc basis. Comment has already been made about the Worker-Priest movement. But before the proliferation of Regional Courses in the following decade, the 1970's, there took place significant developments in establishing a permanent and widespread pattern of what later came to be termed Non-Stipendiary Ministry. The new provision and initiative came to be a significant factor in the call for the availability of part time, non-residential, theological training, throughout the country.

The story of the establishment of the category of Non-Stipendiary Ministry has been adequately described elsewhere by Patrick Vaughan²¹ and Mark Hodge.²² By the end of 1969, out of a total of 94 clergy then trained by the Southwark Ordination Course, some 37 would later have been described as Non-Stipendiary

²¹ Patrick Vaughan, *Non-Stipendiary Ministry in the Church of England* (San Francisco, Mellen Research University Press, 1990).

²² GS 583A, 'Non-stipendiary Ministry in the Church of England', by Mark Hodge, 1983.

Ministers. The example of the SOC pattern of part-time training, coupled with this consequent deployment, proved a significant factor in the eventual acceptability of non-stipendiary ministry to the Church as a whole.²³

A CACTM Working Party on Supplementary Ministries reported in 1961.²⁴ Having been prompted by a Lambeth Conference resolution of 1958 and developments at Southwark in 1960, it is surprising that the group's Report was never formally published. However Vaughan reports²⁵ that its fundamental recommendation was for action: 'The time for talk is over... our sole recommendation therefore is that progress can now only be made by active experiment... We would urge that Bishops take steps to seek out, train, and in appropriate cases ordain men to such spheres of "supplementary" ministry as the needs and opportunities of the Church in their dioceses appear to them to demand.' Five years later in addition to those trained at Southwark, more than 32 men had been ordained to such ministries in a total of 21 dioceses.²⁶

The Welsby Report of 1968 entitled 'A Supplementary Ministry'²⁷ has been described as 'the foundation charter for Non-Stipendiary Ministry in the Church of England'.²⁸ It began by recognising 'that the supplementary ministry is an accomplished fact' and went on to recommend how this new ministry might be regularised and promoted in parochial situations.

²³ GS583A, p.17.

²⁴ Vaughan, *Non-Stipendiary Ministry*, p.219.

²⁵ Vaughan, *Non-Stipendiary Ministry*, p.220.

²⁶ Vaughan, *Non-Stipendiary Ministry*, p.223.

²⁷ Cited in Vaughan, *Non-Stipendiary Ministry*, p.228.

²⁸ GS 583A, p.18.

The report made clear recommendations about training for the new category of ordinands and Vaughan asserts²⁹ that the various models of Regional Theological Course which eventually evolved all were to derive their rationale from these guidelines. The recommendations concerned basic standards, style, length, work assessment and structure. The excerpts from the report cited by Vaughan are worth repeating:

a) Standards:

Because... we cannot acknowledge a ministry of the Sacraments apart from the ministry of the Word, the training of auxiliary priests would be such that they will need no further *ministerial* training in order to be qualified (should they wish and if they were deemed suitable) for full-time parochial ministry... The *content* (as distinct from 'the machinery') of the training should be that of the General Ordination Examination syllabus, but the approach should not be over-academic; much of the theology should be drawn out of the men's past and present experience.

b) Style:

"[It] must not be just a correspondence course... It must include the pastoral care of the men concerned, training in the devotional life, and the development of verbal (as compared with written) skills, which will normally be provided by group activity and residential courses."

c) Length and Assessment:

A three-year course should be the norm... We do not think that candidates should normally be required to take examinations, but they should be continually assessed during the training, along the same lines as operate at present... in many Colleges of Education.

d) Structure:

Certain dioceses may be in a position to experiment with schemes, diocesan and/or regional, perhaps on the lines of the Southwark or Gloucester Schemes; but we recommend that dioceses should investigate possibilities of other and different forms of training whenever they can. These schemes should make use of University and other adult education facilities whenever this can be done.

The matter was debated in February 1969 at the Church Assembly session when it was asked to support virtually all the recommendations of the Welsby

²⁹ Vaughan, *Non-Stipendiary Ministry*, p.231.

Report. This being done, the House of Bishops published in 1970 'The Bishops' Regulations for the Selection and Training of Candidates for the Auxiliary Pastoral Ministry'.³⁰ Vaughan describes these as:³¹ 'a watershed in the history of non-stipendiary ministry... No longer was this ministry hypothetical, clandestine or merely expedient. Non-stipendiary ministry was now officially established as a legally allowable and strategically desirable variant within the ordained ministry of the Church of England.' Having arrived at the watershed the Church now needed to establish widespread part-time training facilities in order to equip those to be ordained on this basis.

³⁰ Cited in Vaughan, *Non-Stipendiary Ministry*, p.242.

³¹ Vaughan, *Non-Stipendiary Ministry*, p.244.

Chapter 2: The Initial Phase of Course Development 1970-79

The need to train candidates for the newly established category of Non-Stipendiary Ministry (then called Auxiliary Pastoral Ministry) was a positive reason behind the development of a network of Regional Theological Courses. But there was also a general desire to plan better theological education overall, mixed up with the need to respond to financial pressures caused by half-empty Colleges. These problems were addressed in a GS20, a report by the House of Bishops on the Reorganisation of the Theological Colleges which was discussed in the spring 1971 General Synod. In response to concerns over dangers of closing certain of the residential colleges, Mr B.E. Haworth of Manchester said,¹ 'These [non-residential] schemes are there to train men, and they do not require costly buildings. Surely we do not need to be afraid that if, by some miracle the members [presumably of the body of ordinands] suddenly increased, we would not be able to train them.'

The positive confidence exhibited in the debate about the future of the non-residential sector was in marked contrast to the less developed forecast contained within the report Church of England individual titles 'Theological Colleges for Tomorrow', published in 1968. The main thrust of this report had been to recommend planned reorganisation of the residential Colleges in order to ensure better contact with university centres. Its basic assumption was that the number of ordinands would not decline but be maintained at a figure of about 1250 in training, of whom no more than fifty would be attached to the Southwark Course.

¹ Church of England (Reference Works), *Proceedings of General Synod*, Spring 1971, Vol 2, No. 1, p.167.

The reports of ACCM to General Synod during the 1970's and accounts of Synod debates² during the same period indicate the actual growing profile of the Regional Courses in spite of the Church's conservatism expressed above. The second institution to be mentioned, in the 1970 ACCM Report,³ was the then 'newly founded' North West Ordination Course in Manchester which, with Southwark, was said to 'offer good opportunities' for training for the newly approved Auxiliary Pastoral Ministry. The following year's report lists the number of ordinands attending the Southwark Course as 29, the North West Course as fourteen and also mentions two men in training at Gloucester, where there had for some years been an experimental local scheme in operation but which was never, in its then form, to be recognised officially by the central Church authorities.

The 1972 ACCM Report noted the approval for the first time of the West Midlands Course for Auxiliary Ministry Training based at the Queen's College, Birmingham and the Oak Hill Auxiliary Ministry Training Course for candidates to the north and east of London, together with the comment that other courses for auxiliary training were being planned elsewhere. The *General Synod Proceedings* for the same year mention the Gloucester theological course as having been in existence since 1964.⁴ More interesting in terms of the approach to training is the comment recorded about an experiment at Bethnal Green in the sphere of auxiliary ministry,⁵ 'to send our candidates to residential colleges, even if they could have qualified for entrance, would have uprooted them from their environment and

² See the Bibliography Section 2, General Synod Series and Section 1 under 'Church of England (Reference Works)' respectively for general source data.

³ Section 4.

⁴ *Proceedings*, Vol 3, no.3, July 1972, p.372-3. But as previously stated this course was never centrally recognised in its then form.

⁵ *Proceedings*, Vol 3, no. 3, July 1972, p.366.

robbed them of their greatest single qualification, their identification with the local community: To submit them to the traditional pattern of academic training would be to alienate them from the very people they are called to serve.' The lobby supporting the 'theological training in context' for ordinands was already established.

In 1973 the ACCM Report reported the first time recognition of the East Midlands Joint Ordination Training Scheme and the Oxford Auxiliary Ministry Training Course. The total then in training in the Regional Courses is shown in the following table reprinted from page 11 of the Report.

Table 2/1: Total students in training on the Courses, 1973

Course	Full-Time Ministry	Auxiliary Pastoral Ministry
Southwark	21	20
North-West Ordination Course	17	21
East Midlands	-	9
West Midlands	-	30
Oxford	-	16
Oak Hill	-	6
Lincoln	-	3
Total 1973	38	105

In addition one woman was also in training on the North West Course, for Accredited Lay Ministry. Again it was said that ACCM was aware that further schemes, both regional and diocesan, were in preparation. An indication of the

newness of the Regional Courses and their experimental nature can be inferred from the following:⁶

The Committee [for Theological Education] has attempted to allow as much experiment and flexibility in the teaching and assessment methods adopted by the different courses as the Regulations permit. The courses are using the varied resources available in their own locality such as theological colleges, university adult education departments and diocesan retreat and conference houses. They are also in different ways attempting to meet the needs for ministry in the dioceses they are serving. How these experiments are in fact working out will be evaluated through inspections, the first of which will take place during 1974.

The year 1974, saw the publication of GS202, 'Patterns of Ministry', by Hugh Melinsky, an ACCM report which sought to summarise the findings of no fewer than nineteen documents about ministry published over the preceding six years. The report included, among the many different aspects of the ministry referred to, the issue of costs of clergy stipends, inflation rates of 8% and 15% per annum, and the possible wisdom of deploying smaller numbers of full-time clergy.⁷ Although not at this stage directly related to the costs of training, the issue of financial economy here introduced in a general way was to increase in importance in the years following.

In 1974, it was being reported to General Synod that ordinands on the Oxford Course were feeling exhilarated in spite of their workload, that their secular work was absolutely unimpaired, and that their 98% attendance rate was astonishing the university department for external studies.⁸ The speaker, Canon Wilfrid Browning, was director of the said Course, which may explain the very much more

⁶ ACCM Report in GS201 "General Synod Annual Report 1973", p.3.

⁷ page 3 of the report, citing the '1972 Sixth Report of the Archbishops' Advisors on Needs and Resources'.

⁸ *Proceedings*, Vol 5, no 3, p.586-7.

positive nature of his findings in comparison with the more independent previous research carried out among Southwark ordinands! The ACCM Report of the same year recorded two candidates in training at the new Southern Dioceses Ministerial Training Scheme.

The growing issue of finances was high on the agenda in the 1975 ACCM Report. The first sentence concerning the Theological Colleges reads '1975 was a critical year for the colleges, as inflation and inadequate numbers combined to produce acute financial problems for many of them'. The report, GS265, 'Alternative Patterns of Training', published the same year, proposed a wholesale reorganisation of all the training institutions, both residential and non-residential, into ten regional centres.⁹ It was said that this would offer increased flexibility in training, given the developing patterns in the ordained ministry, better use of university resources, better integration of full time and part time courses and also less economic waste through training ordinands in too many separate institutions. The report was far sighted yet unpopular and defended without success at the November 1976 Synod. It was never implemented, although GS Misc 57, 'Theological Training: A Policy for the future' - the Guildford Report, referred to below, did attempt to take some of its ideas a stage further in principle and the 1990's were to see the idea of 'clustering' of institutions as a sort of half-way house of sharing resources without losing existing autonomies.

The General Synod debate in November 1976 in fact saw quite a wide ranging debate on the Church's pattern of theological education. At one point a representative of Southwell diocese¹⁰ criticised the Church overall as being 'so

⁹ see chapter 6, entitled 'Regional Centres'.

¹⁰ *Proceedings*, pp.1154-6.

deficient in educational theory', whilst praising the East Midlands Course for embodying the desirable attributes of the newly emphasised "lifelong learning". In a tone of enthusiasm he advocated non-residential training for a higher proportion of ordinands generally on educational grounds. He was also keen to emphasise the presence on the East Midlands Course of sixteen non-ordinands as well as eight ordinands, indicating this to be a positive factor from the life-long learning point of view. In fact this feature will be picked up later as a negative one.¹¹

In marked contrast to the above enthusiasm, a number of criticisms were also made, some of them damning.¹² The general point, 'I am not sure that in any other profession or job it would be thought that one could study for training while doing other full-time work', may be hackneyed, but still needs to be addressed by each new enthusiast for part-time training: similarly also the point that residential training will always enable more time to be spent in its training activity and more subject matter to be taught than in its non-residential equivalent. More specific were the criticisms that some of the Courses did not meet any of the House of Bishop's regulations governing auxiliary pastoral ministry schemes, whilst others were duplicating the facilities of new theological colleges and thereby wasting money. It was revealed that in more than one case the ACCM Theological Education Committee had had to say that a Course syllabus was totally unsatisfactory, yet teaching was proceeding from it. In an atmosphere in which the Regional Courses were being held up as educational pioneers, there was a strong voice declaring that they should not be financed from central funds if *de facto* they were unauthorised.

¹¹ See Chapter 4.

¹² *Proceedings*, pp.1174-6.

Brief reference to one of the reports considered by General Synod at the time, GS303 'Theological Training: A Policy for the Future', indicates why there were grounds for disquiet. Whilst the following table which constitutes part of its Appendix E may be taken to indicate excellent progress in the development of a network of Regional Courses, one can understand the disquiet that no fewer than five out of thirteen were then 'unrecognised'. Not unnaturally, rapid steps were made by ACCM to rectify this situation.

Table 2/2

From: Theological training: A Policy for the Future (GS303) Dated May 1976

APPENDIX E

NON-RESIDENTIAL COURSES

I. The following courses are 'recognised' for training men for the auxiliary pastoral ministry, and in the case of Southwark and North West only, for the training for the stipendiary ministry.

Course	No. of ordinands in training (Oct. 1975)	Area Served
Southwark	46 (incl. 19 for stip. min.)	Home counties, esp. South of Thames.
North West	52 (incl. 23 for stip. min.)	Dioceses of Chester, Liverpool, Bradford, Manchester, Blackburn, Wakefield, Sheffield, parts of Derby, Ripon, parts of York.
East Midlands	8	Derbyshire, Notts, Lincs, Leics.
West Midlands	22	Dioceses of Birmingham, Lichfield, Worcester, Coventry, Hereford.
Oxford	15	Diocese of Oxford.
Oak Hill	7	Dioceses of London, Chelmsford, St. Albans.
Southern Dioceses	24	Dioceses of Salisbury, Winchester, Portsmouth, Exeter, Bath & Wells.
North East	Starting Oct. 1976	Durham, Newcastle, parts of York.

II. The following courses are not yet 'recognised', although negotiations for recognition are in progress in some cases.

Course	No. of ordinands believed to be in training	Area Served
Bristol	16	Diocese of Bristol.
Gloucester	13	Gloucester, Somerset, Hereford.
Norwich	13	Norfolk.
Truro	25	Cornwall.
St Albans	Starting Oct. 1976	Herts, Beds, Cambs.

It is understood that some other dioceses are planning to start their own schemes,

From an educational point of view, the next development came in February 1977 with the publication of GS Misc 57, 'Theological Training: A Policy for the Future.' – The Guildford Report. This was the result of an *ad hoc* working party of the House of Bishops which had sought to further the idea of GS265, 'Alternative Patterns of Training', concerning the reshaping of all theological training institutions into a pattern of regional centres and as also previously developed in GS303 'Theological Training: A Policy for the Future'. The Guildford Report foresaw development of 'Regional Institutes' rather than 'Regional Centres'. The Working Party now understood their task as promoting active co-operation between agencies in a region, rather than as planning new, re-organised, institutions, to replace those then current. Five major advantages of an institute-based system were propounded under clause 5 of the report:

- (a) They would enable locally-based courses, such as already exist in some areas for non-stipendiary ministry training, to have access to other local resources, and to obtain the necessary support and guidance.
- (b) They would monitor the activities of the various programmes of training in the region, and so safeguard the national standards required by the Bishops, which will continue to be moderated through the Advisory Council for the Church's Ministry (ACCM).
- (c) They would ensure that men and women in every diocese can be offered the opportunity to train for their appropriate form of ministry,

whether as lay persons or as clergy. This would involve direct liaison between Regional Institutes and diocesan Boards and Councils of Education.

(d) They would strengthen the links between residential and non-residential training for ordination, as well as linking the existing theological colleges with other institutions in the region.

(e) They would act as agencies for ecumenical development in theological training for clergy and laity.

In addition it was suggested that such Institutes should be required to cater for the whole range of traditions to be found in the Church of England rather than to retain the party lines of the residential Colleges.

The 1978 ACCM Report, contained in GS406, 'General Synod Annual Reports', 1978, noted the recognition of two more part-time Courses and that the complete list was now as follows, numbering no less than fourteen separate institutions:

Bristol & Gloucester School of Ministry
Canterbury School of Ministry
East Anglian Ministerial Training Course
East Midlands Joint Ordination Training Scheme
Exeter/Truro Non-stipendiary Ministry Course
North East Non-stipendiary Training Scheme
North West Ordination Course
Oak Hill Non-stipendiary Ministry Course
Oxford Auxiliary Pastoral Ministry Course
St. Albans Diocesan Ministerial Training Scheme
St. Deiniol's Library
Southern Dioceses Ministerial Training Scheme
Southwark Ordination Course
West Midlands Supplementary Ministry Course

Reference was made to 'the fear that there will be an unending stream of new courses', and assurance was given that only one further one was contemplated. The Carlisle Course duly made its appearance on the ACCM Report lists in 1980, and the regional coverage from which subsequent patterns have been developed was thus completed.

The Courses themselves differ quite widely as to the archival basis from which their opening stories can be traced from a local point of view. A range of materials is available for the North-West Ordination Course, the Oak Hill Auxiliary Pastoral Ministry Course, the Oxford Diocesan Auxiliary Pastoral Ministry Course, the North East Non-Stipendiary Ministry Training Scheme, the North East Ordination Course and the Exeter/Truro NSM Course, representing preservation of appropriate archives in each case. Archives are no longer preserved for the West Midlands Supplementary Ministry Course, the St. Alban's Diocese Ministry Training Scheme, the Southern Dioceses Ministerial Training Scheme, the East Anglian Ministerial Training Scheme or the Bristol and Gloucester School of Ministry: however an interesting set of minutes exists for the non-validated Gloucester Theological Course. The central archives for the Southwark Ordination Course and the Canterbury School of Ministry were destroyed as recently as 2001, although a few documents for Southwark for the period 1970-1980 were traced for the present study in other files from the Church of England Records Office. The Principal of the present East Midlands Ministry Training Course absolutely refused any research access to that Course's archives or those of its predecessor the East Midlands Joint Ordination Training Scheme, and so it is impossible to comment on their possible existence.

From the sparse archives available for the Southwark Course from 1970 onwards, a few important points can be gleaned. The Council minutes for May 1970¹³ record the intention to appoint a new, full-time Principal, subject to ACCM agreement and a necessary increase in student fees. At the same time, the outgoing part-time Principal, Canon Frank Colquhoun, reported frequent changes in the plans

¹³ Held in C of E Records Office, file ACCM/COLL/COU/SWO.

of students during training as to whether they would engage in stipendiary or non-stipendiary ministry following ordination. Some eighteen months later Council minutes¹⁴ record 'considerable disquiet' following the inception of the course at Oak Hill for the Supplementary Ministry, which it seems had taken Bishop John Robinson, the Chair of the Southwark Course, completely by surprise! The disquiet concerned 'the lack of communication and co-operation, as well as the possibility of Evangelical candidates being attracted to Oak Hill rather than the Southwark Course, thereby emphasising differences in churchmanship rather than bringing the various schools of thought together, as was possible at present'. There was also worry about a possible reduction in student numbers with a consequent financial loss and limitations. In the minutes of December 1972¹⁵ the issue of some men doing only one year's training was addressed. The Principal recommended responding to appropriate specific individual needs but hoped the Council would 'resist pressures to provide crash courses to "clericalise laymen"'! A year later the Principal's Report¹⁶ recorded a new ecumenical approach being made by the Methodist Church for the training of a number of their ordinands. At the same time he reported that the small third year had spent their final term in residence at Mirfield, saying, out of his concern for proper and adequate spiritual formation, 'It provided our men with some insight into the dimension they will need in order to engage effectively with the issues of tomorrow's world.'

The somewhat self-condemnatory implication of this Report is that at the time the Principal of Southwark considered the spiritual formation available on his

¹⁴ Minutes dated 16 December 1971, C of E Records Office file ACCM/COLL/COU/SWO.

¹⁵ Held in C of E Records office file ACCM/COLL/COU/SWO

¹⁶ December 1973, C of E Records Office file ACCM/CTE/COURSE/16.

course alone to be inadequate to meet the needs of ordained ministry. This was not a glib comment but one founded on the basis of a deep insight into the need for Christians to experience true prayer as a foundation for the Christian life.¹⁷ Perhaps the life of prayer was not the only area thought lacking, as indicated by a brief but telling sentence in the context of provision of an academic hood:¹⁸ 'Certainly the hood makes up in sartorial resplendence for anything it may lack in terms of academic credibility.' The contemporary archive reader could perhaps be forgiven for concluding that in spite of the considerable energies which had been invested in the Southwark Ordination Course over some thirteen years, there were still serious concerns among its own staff as to its capability of providing acceptable training for either a proper academic or a spiritual formation. Nevertheless, the general economic climate, to be explored more fully in the next chapter, caused the Principal to make the following forecast at the opening of his December 1975 Report:¹⁹ 'initially non-residential training for ordination was experimental. It now seems, at least on the cards, that it could become normative within a measurable space of time as residential colleges cease through inflation to be economically viable.'

If the surprise expressed by the Southwark Course Council on December 1971 at the inception of the Oak Hill Auxiliary Pastoral Ministry Scheme was genuine, it was also understandable given that the initial formal meeting of the latter did not take place until July 1972!²⁰ At this meeting, the Bishop of Barking

¹⁷ As witnessed by his article in the Southwark Ordination Course Newsletter of Advent 1973, retained in C of E Records office file ACCM/CTE/COURSE/16.

¹⁸ Principal's Report, May 1973, C of E Records Office file ACCM/COLL/COU/SWO.

¹⁹ Held in C of E Records Office file ACCM/COLL/COU/SWO.

²⁰ All Oak Hill A.P.M. Scheme minutes for this period are held by the North Thames Course in file NSM – ADV.

expressed 'the hopes of the Bishops of London, St. Albans and Chelmsford that it would be possible to set up a course based at Oak Hill which would serve a wider range of traditions than that normally met by the College in its student intake.' It was noted that the Southwark Ordination Course 'greatly valued its comprehensiveness which could be limited if the Oak Hill course drew away candidates of an evangelical outlook in the London Area'. At the same time members of the Oak Hill College Council were careful to point out that there was an obligation to honour the terms of the Kingham Hill Trust. There seems to have been some substance to the Southwark Council's disquiet, however, since at the opening meeting it was also reported that two men were already undergoing the course, implying a start date of autumn 1971, and that a syllabus was already in place! The Principal made mention in his report of a steering committee and this must have by this stage been well-established.

By December 1972, alterations had been made to the Oak Hill College timetable to 'enable APM men to join more fully in the life of the College', and a document had been produced with formal proposals for an outline syllabus and a scheme of notes and rules governing the conduct of the Course. No conflict with the Southwark Course was forecast, a plentiful supply of students for both, and other courses were envisaged. The scale of the operation conceived of was, however, modest, since in December 1973 the possibility of limiting the number on the APM Course to twelve at any one time was suggested. The Principal (also the Principal of Oak Hill) stated his belief at the same time that the part-time Course was an unsuitable medium for the training for full time ministry. This view was endorsed by the Advisory Committee which made it thus diametrically opposed to the neighbouring Council at Southwark. Over the following months, the principal issue

of concern was the issue of 'job security' for the intending APM Minister, occasioned by an individual incident following a change of Incumbent in a sponsoring parish.

In June 1975 the number of students on the Oak Hill APM Course was reported as eight. At the same time the number of members of the Advisory Committee was nine. Perhaps this is an appropriate situation from which to observe that whilst from their inception the 'headline' costs of part-time training Courses have been considerably lower than those of residential Colleges, in fact their 'hidden' costs, comprising the time of many individuals paid for by others, may always have been considerable.

At the end of 1975 the Advisory Committee reversed their previous policy of two years' standing concerning the suitability of their Course for training men for full-time ministry, the reason given being, rather weakly, that it was happening more and more elsewhere. 1976 saw the founding of a separate library for APM students, to give access to essential texts, and the planning of an extension centre at Colchester to ease travel arrangements for some of the more far-flung students. A Bishops' Inspection Report considered in the same year was reported as generally encouraging, whilst in contrast to the findings at Southwark, Moderator's interviews of all students in 1978 indicated 'general reassurance' about the way they were coping with the 'exacting demands' of the course on family life.

The archives of the North West Ordination Course are particularly comprehensive. The earliest documents survive from 1968-9,²¹ when a scheme for the Course was proposed with a view to seeking approval by ACCM in time for a launch date of autumn 1970, following the planned appointment of a Principal in

²¹ Contained in file marked 'North West Regional Training Scheme', NOC archives.

the preceding January.²² It was taken for granted that the Southwark Ordination Course formed a valid model for ordination training, but it was questioned as to what extent the latter had identified with training for a supplementary [i.e. non-stipendiary] ministry.²³ Representatives of the dioceses of Blackburn, Chester, Liverpool and Manchester were committed to a pilot scheme based in Manchester, with the active co-operation of Chester and Manchester in the first instance.²⁴ With a mixture of enthusiasm and uncertainty, it was stated that 'The scheme would be worth doing even if it lasted for one generation of students only'.²⁵ A careful budget was drawn up and it was forecast that the lecture cost in 1970 would be a fee of 3s 6d per person per lecture.²⁶ The initial core teaching provision was to be with the Manchester University Department of Extra Mural Studies and their Certificate in Biblical Knowledge programme, which was to provide two Old Testament and Two New Testament papers of just below 'A' level standard at the end of the first year.²⁷ In looking at the proposals, ACCM's Theological Education Advisory Committee questioned the use of the above four papers and suggested that all candidates should be sent to residential theological College for their final term.²⁸ This implies that at this date ACCM was not yet totally convinced of the desirability of training for the

²² Executive Body minutes, January 1969, North West Regional Training Scheme file, NOC archives.

²³ Paper entitled 'Regional Training Schemes', June 1968, North West Regional Training Scheme file, NOC archives.

²⁴ Aide Memoire of meeting held at Church House, Manchester on 14 June 1968, North West Regional Training Scheme file, NOC archives.

²⁵ Aide Memoire Executive Body, November 1968, North West Regional Training Scheme file, NOC archives.

²⁶ Executive Body Minutes, February 1969, North West Regional Training Scheme file, NOC archives.

²⁷ Introduction paper, Feb 1969, North West Regional Training Scheme file, NOC Archives.

²⁸ Executive Body Minutes, March 1969, North West Regional Training Scheme file, NOC archives.

ordained ministry solely by part-time means. After the appointment of the Rev Dr. Graham Selby as Principal, the latter took a definitive role in the drawing up of the initial syllabus and took careful note of the Southwark 'Ten Year Review'.²⁹ Dr. Selby cited two documents as the basis for the theological and educational principles undergirding his syllabus, namely:³⁰ '(A) The official Report of the study on Patterns of Ministry and Theological Education to the Fourth Assembly of the World Council of Churches at Uppsala, Sweden; and (B) the book 'Patterns of Ministry' by Steven G. Mackie, which is closely related'.

The impressive initial list of Council members for the course contained no fewer than twenty-five members and the initial student intake in 1970 comprised thirteen.³¹ A second part-time member of staff was appointed in time for the commencement of the 1971-72 academic year. The initial publicity leaflet for the Course³² posed the question, 'Is this an easy way to get ordained?' and the answer given was, 'Emphatically not. The standard of the Course will be high, and its nature such as to make heavy demands of time and concentration. The Course will, however, open up the possibility of Ordination to men who could not, perhaps for financial or family reasons, have completed the demands of a traditional and wholly residential theological college training.'

The Principal's Report of March 1970 listed five aims for the Course, namely:

²⁹ Principal's Report, May 1970, North West Regional Training Scheme file, NOC archives.

³⁰ Syllabus document, simply headed 'North West Ordination Course', North West Regional Training Scheme file, NOC archives.

³¹ Council Minutes, October 1970, North West Regional Training Scheme file, NOC archives.

³² Copy in North West Regional Training Scheme file, NOC archives.

- a) To produce men of God who would develop a real and abiding spiritual life.
- b) To give to the men a profound understanding of the Christian Faith.
- c) To develop in them abilities to communicate their faith.
- d) To develop in them habits of study that will continue after ordination.
- e) and to develop the ability to bring theological understanding to bear on contemporary problems and situations.

By June 1972,³³ it was being proposed to set up study centres in Yorkshire for candidates from the dioceses of Wakefield, Bradford, Sheffield, Ripon and York, and Chesterfield for those from Derby. At the same time a report from the external examiners on assessed essays described the overall standard as 'impressively good'. By September the first ecumenical student dimension of the Course had been established with the inclusion of three Baptist members.³⁴ In a rather different vein, questions were also being asked about the distinctive approach thought necessary for post-ordination training for those to be ordained from the course.³⁵

By 1973 there were students from a wide area training on NWOC. They came from the dioceses of Blackburn, Liverpool, York, Chester, Manchester, Derby, Sheffield, Lichfield and Wakefield. As well as the three Baptist students already mentioned, one Methodist lay member had also been admitted and it was reported that the Methodist Conference was about to consider the inclusion of its own ordination candidates.³⁶ The student body in total numbered 47.

³³ Council Minutes, June 1972, Council Minutes file, NOC archives

³⁴ Council Minutes, Sept 1972, Council Minutes file, NOC archives.

³⁵ Memorandum of a conversation between Canon Alford and Canon Selby on 4th June, 1972 – enclosed with Council Minutes, Council Minutes file, NOC archives.

³⁶ Principal's Report – June and October 1973, Principal's Reports file, NOC archives.

The first formal Inspection of the Course took place in 1974. From the extensive discussions which took place subsequently, one of the principal recommendations seems to have been a suggestion that the curriculum be redrawn along unit (i.e. modular) lines.³⁷ If there was some resistance to this suggestion, there was also considerable amusement at the contradiction of another recommendation, that a further full time member of staff be employed at increased cost, by ACCM's own Fees and Grants Committee, who were at the same time pressing for cost savings by reducing staffing levels!³⁸

1975 saw some discussions as to possible needs for developments in the Course to support envisaged developments in rural ministry in East Yorkshire.³⁹ However, a few months later the Principal reported that most inquiries for the new intake were coming from west of the Pennines.⁴⁰ Alongside such practical concerns, the Council debated the role of the clergy in disseminating academic theology, accepting, rather surprisingly, that other people with theology degrees were needed to help the clergy to understand what academic theologians were saying!⁴¹ Shortly after this a commitment was made to sponsor the proposed Manchester Christian Institute,⁴² said to be an experiment to follow the lines suggested in GS265, "Alternative Patterns of Training." Manchester was said to be the area with the best chance of anywhere in England of launching such a creative venture.

³⁷ Council Minutes, November 1974, Council Minutes file, NOC archives.

³⁸ Council Minutes, June 1975, Council Minutes file, NOC archives.

³⁹ Council Minutes, November 1975, Council Minutes file, NOC archives.

⁴⁰ Principal's Report, January 1976, Principal's Reports file, NOC archives.

⁴¹ Council Minutes, February 1976, Council Minutes file, NOC archives.

⁴² Council Minutes, June 1976, Council Minutes file, NOC archives.

Student numbers at the end of 1978 were reported as 55, from the nine dioceses of Blackburn, Bradford, Chester, Liverpool, Manchester, Ripon, Sheffield, Wakefield, and York, plus two from the Baptist Church. This was also the first year of the second Principal of the Course, Canon Hugh Melinsky. Overall the records for the first decade at NWOC give the impression of a serious and successful new academic institution, competent in its teaching, effective in its administration and planning and well thought of by those dioceses it found itself serving. Only one document from the files could be described as slightly alarming, and that is a 'position paper' produced at the end of 1978,⁴³ in which the policy concerning Ministerial Formation was said to be to crack the defensive shells of those brought up in catholic and evangelical traditions in order to 'enable them to grow'. Catholic students who liked to talk about 'ecclesiastical impedimenta' were castigated, as was an Evangelical student who would not consider a curacy if he was to be forced to bow to the Lord's table. One of the recurring questions for all Regional Courses is whether those from such backgrounds can ever find proper encouragement if the weight of background of Course staff is on the side of theological liberalism.

If the North West Course can be presented as a serious and successful academic institution from the outset, the opposite is true of the Gloucester Theological Course, which was in existence for part of the same period and for which Governors' meeting minutes exist for 1971-75. The minutes mentioned present a picture of the modest origins of the Course and of the problems associated with attempting to deliver a varied course of theological education to a small group of varied students. In April 1971 there were thirteen students in all, and the Director thought that it would be very difficult to maintain the Course if numbers fell below eight. In fact they fell to nine the following October. Difficulties were being

⁴³ Filed in Principal's Reports file, NOC archives.

experienced by one lecturer in dealing with a group of eight students at different levels of understanding, and instead of General Ministerial Examination essays acting as a check on the teaching of the whole syllabus, it seems that they were tending to form the only syllabus! The way out of this situation was slightly unusual as recorded in Governors' Minutes for April 1971: 'The meeting was reminded that for a man over 40 the Bishop himself could decide what the content of the training should be. The Gloucester Course was basically not designed to train men under 40 for a full-time ministry.' In the following autumn an approach was made to Bristol University to see if they would validate the Course. The University would not, but offered to absorb the Course instead! Then the next year the Governors' Minutes of April 1972 record that ACCM Inspectors had concluded 'that, although the Course serves a useful purpose, it was a limited one and [that they] could not endorse their predecessors' judgement that the Course was making a valuable contribution to theological education. The Inspectors felt unable to recommend the Bishops to recognise the Course as approved for ordination training.' Discussion the following December gives a revealing glimpse of the self-awareness of the Course, it being minuted, 'It was felt that the Inspectors did not understand the purpose of the Course, which was to produce a maintenance ministry.' The clause 'which was to produce a maintenance ministry' was subsequently expunged from the record, perhaps from embarrassment, perhaps as an early example of awareness of 'political correctness'. With numbers down to six in the autumn of 1972, the Bishop of Gloucester moved that the course be suspended at the end of the 1973 academic year. It looked as if time was up for a Course which had prepared 32 men for ordination, but whose horizon was perhaps too narrow to satisfy the developing needs of the Church as a whole. Although the decision to suspend the Course was

rescinded at the Governors' Meeting on July 1973, a decision at the same time that a minimum student figure of four be required for it to run perhaps speaks more of a rearguard action than a vanguard. At a final meeting of the Governors in January 1975, it was decided to reapply to ACCM for validation at 'some suitable future date', but Course records thereafter cease.

The Oxford Auxiliary Pastoral Ministry Course was founded in 1972 as the result of the initiative of the then bishop of Oxford, following the founding of the West Midlands Course in 1971 (the latter having no surviving early records). It was felt that since Oxford was a large diocese with four Theological Colleges and enormous resources, it should be possible to establish a scheme for the training of the emerging Auxiliary Pastoral Ministry. The person chosen to found and manage the new endeavour was the then Diocesan Director of Ordinands and at the inception the student body comprised eight ordinands. Following two further intakes, a total of 24 was achieved, of mixed churchmanship. Early negotiations with the University of Oxford Department for External Studies resulted in a 'Certificate in Biblical and Theological Studies' soon being offered which was "at once" recognised by ACCM as the equivalent of GME.⁴⁴

The pattern of delivery of the Course followed what was becoming the normal pattern for gathered Courses, with one weekday evening being used for teaching sessions, complemented by two residential weekends per term and an annual ten days' 'residence'.⁴⁵ There was a division of curriculum and the periods of residence were devoted to Pastoral Studies and preaching, the midweek sessions being for the more traditional 'academic' elements. These latter sessions took place

⁴⁴ Booklet 'The Story of the Oxford Course 1972-1992. A Personal Account', by Wilfrid Browning, 1992, p.4, SAOMC archives for OMC.

⁴⁵ 'The Story of the Oxford Course', p.5.

at St. Stephen's House, Oxford, one of the residential Colleges, and there was from the beginning contact between Course and College students in the sharing of a meal as part of the evening. In later years the Oxford Course had developed the reputation of being, 'very academic and not very practical'⁴⁶ – a reputation to which the separation of academic and pastoral curricular elements must have contributed.

In support of the Course Director, the Bishop of Oxford appointed a supervisory Board whose purpose was:⁴⁷

- a) to keep under review the contents of the syllabus;
- b) to insist that the teaching shall be of sound quality and that a proper balance of churchmanship is preserved;
- c) to assure itself that the method of assessment shall meet the bishops' regulations;
- d) to act as a Court of Appeal;
- e) to advise the Director on matters connected with the course and its students.

This brief statement of purposes serves to highlight the greater simplicity of organisation possible before each of the Courses became a self-contained autonomous institution. More particularly, purpose (b) concerning churchmanship, was a notable attempt to direct policy in this area. All Regional Courses offer a student body of varying churchmanship but the Oxford Course in this way stood out as making the issue one of policy as against consequence. The reason for this appears partly however to be negative. In the course of the setting-up arrangements which must have assumed the ensuing close relationship with St. Stephen's House, the Principal of Wycliffe Hall wrote to ACCM as follows:⁴⁸

With great respect to our good friends at St. Stephen's House, we think it a disadvantage that the great bulk of teaching on such sensitive subjects as the Church, the Ministry, the Sacraments, and their administration should be done by the staff of a single college which

⁴⁶ Interview with the Principal of SAOMC, 21 May 2001.

⁴⁷ Minutes of meeting of 31 January 1973, NSM Course Supervisory Board file, SAOMC archives for OMC.

⁴⁸ e.g. Minutes of 21 December 1978, NSM Course Supervisory Board file, SAOMC archives for OMC.

stands for advanced anglo-catholic churchmanship and that other traditions should have little or no share in the teaching about the Church, Worship, Prayer etc.

It is evident that the Oxford course was launched with something less than goodwill on the part of the local Evangelical constituency!

On a different matter, the Supervisory Board Minutes betray an archaism unique among the Regional Courses, in that they refer to surnames only of academic staff in their text (e.g. 'Browning reported').⁴⁹ This may give additional insight into the 'very academic but not very practical' characterisation previously mentioned.

One further point remains to be made from the documentation still available from the initial period of the Oxford Course. It is a point of realism which in the subsequent history of the Regional Theological Courses has largely been forgotten, in the general enthusiasm to promote the notion of equivalence of training between Course and College. At that time the Bishop of Oxford had a policy of requiring a further period of additional and residential training for any 'Auxiliary Pastoral Minister' wishing to transfer to the full-time stipendiary ministry.⁵⁰ This is in the context of notes headed 'The Oxford A.P.M. Training Scheme'⁵¹, which include the following introduction:

The scheme is not intended to cover everything that would normally be included in the curriculum of a residential theological college, but it does claim both to initiate its members into systematic, coherent and rational reflection about the purpose of God disclosed in Jesus Christ, and also to encourage the ordinands into a lasting enthusiasm for theology; and we should hope that it will be a theology that will enable men to hold together their daily work and their priestly ministry.

⁴⁹ Letter, dated 29 November 1972, NSM Course, Memoranda and Reports file, SAOMC archives for OMC.

⁵⁰ Policy recorded in the first Bishops' Inspection Report, p.5, NSM Course Memoranda and Reports file, SAOMC archives for OMC.

⁵¹ Contained in Weekends and Residences file, SAOMC archives for OMC.

Our principle is to be selective in the subject of study but to tackle what is selected at a sufficient depth to enable the student to feel a legitimate sense of achievement.

The next Course, chronologically speaking, from which primary source archives may be accessed is the North East Ordination Course, from which the Minute Book of the Governing Body survives from its founding in 1976. The first meeting was held in April of that year, when Canon Ronald Coppin of Durham Cathedral was appointed part-time Warden, and it was reported that the Extra Mural Department of Durham University had agreed to sponsor the weekly lectures for the first year. (Twenty five years later one of the most significant critical questions to be asked of NEOC would be why there was then no seeming connection at all with the University of Durham and its eminent Department of Theology). The course opened with eleven students aged 33 – 56, who were said to be ‘strikingly representative of the national average in terms of age, jobs and educational background’. In fact, with the exception of one Coal Board electrician, all the other students had a professional or management background. They were all candidates for Non-Stipendiary ministry.

Initial problems encountered included insufficient candidate numbers to allow a first year entry in 1977. There was also criticism of a lack of teaching concerning spirituality together with difficulty encountered with pastoral placements due both to the novelty of Non-Stipendiary ministry and the family stress on students caused by other Course demands. One suggested remedy to this situation involved the postponement of practical training until after ordination as deacon. There were also problems with the first Summer School, but a ‘post-mortem’, led by one Rev George Carey, resulted in a number of detailed suggestions for improvement! Overall the evidence of the minutes at this time

suggests a careful and detailed response on the part of those in authority on the Course to feedback on progress obtained from staff and students alike. For instance, in April 1978 the issue being tackled in this respect was that of student pastoral care.

The source and level of appropriate staffing was also much under discussion at this early stage in the life of NEOC. The possibility of the joint appointment of a member of staff with St. John's College was discussed in October 1978, but in the same breath a new member of staff there declined to continue the involvement with the Course of his predecessor. Notably, however, both New and Old Testament courses were being taught by University staff, the balance of teaching being done by local clergy.

The North East Course was, during the late 1970's, very much in its initial phase. Its start-up was small-scale but Course documentation exhibits an impressive commitment both to the personal and academic well-being of the new student body of an emerging Institution.

The origins of the Exeter/Truro NSM Course lay directly in the Report GS265, 'Alternative Patterns of Training' (*q.v.*). Following publication of the latter the Bishop of Truro set up a Working Party on Training which first met in June 1976. Relevant documentation is preserved by the South West Ministerial Training Course in a file entitled 'Working Party on Training'. At this stage any training for the Auxiliary Pastoral Ministry was taking place through the Southern Dioceses Ministerial Training Scheme, based at Salisbury.

Through a national consultation then taking place, the Exeter working party was able to obtain relevant information on the state and progress of other Regional Theological Courses then existing and the archival file therefore paints a

supplementary picture of progress in the rest of the country from documents not now available elsewhere.

An ACCM document prepared for the Auxiliary Pastoral Ministry consultation at Queen's College, Birmingham in June 1976 is revealing as to the general state of training for such ministry at that date. The document lists the then seven recognised schemes of training:

East Midlands Joint Ordination Training Scheme

Oak Hill College A.P.M. Training Scheme

Oxford A.P.M. Training Scheme

Southern Dioceses Ministerial Training Scheme

North West Ordination Course

Southwark Ordination Course

West Midlands Supplementary Ministry Course

Also the North East Ordination Course was listed as in the process of gaining recognition.

Four unofficial schemes were also recorded, namely:

Diocese of Bristol School for Ministry

Gloucester Theological Course

Norwich Ordination Course

Scholae Cancellarii Truronis.

During the academic year 1974-75, 58 students for ordination were said to have joined these courses together, excluding the Southwark and North-West Courses (which happened to be the oldest-established and biggest). There was an obvious disparity between the Courses on all manner of issues, including fees, staffing levels, adequacy of overall student supervision, training time, syllabus, teaching

method; indeed everything that could be different about the courses at this early stage in their collective history, seemed to be!

An 'Abstract of Consultation' for the above meeting contains the following COURSE REPORTS, which are reproduced in full:

1. Southern Dioceses. (Tony Barnard). Course with 2 years' experience using local tutors serviced from centre. Open University type material and thematic approach to training. Work situation emphasized. Student and tutor enjoy much autonomy in shaping course. Some problems: G.O.E. essay assessment too academically treated by some examiners. Local tutors starved of teamwork. Pastoral care much needed in training.
2. West Midlands. (Anthony Bird. Raymond Hammer). 5 years' experience highlights tension between parish and job centred expectations. Recent, younger entry veering decisively to latter, but general diocesan uncertainty pressurizes non-stipendiaries to solve tension by conformity to traditional parochial concept. Needs resisting. Ordination implies authorized leadership; hence training is for responsibility in mission primarily. Ordained man at work is seen as representative; must be trained as focus and enabler of Christian responsibility in secular sphere. Other findings: group identity essential for students; staff too little time for parish liaison; Diocesan – course integration weak; Advisory Council ineffective on policy.
3. Oxford. (Wilfred Browning). The first group of 10 were ordained – job orientated in outlook. P.O.T. – 3 weekends yearly; good feedback. The men resent the term 'Auxiliary Ministers'.
4. Bristol. (Peter Coleman.) 5 year old course resembles Oxford's. Strong in resources, Training emphasis on work situation – enhanced by younger age of recent candidates. Weak on longer periods of residential training: men unwilling to sacrifice summer holidays. Weekends relied on. Lay readers trained with A.P.M.s. Course best suited for professional/graduate types.
5. Southwark Ordination Course. (Gerald Hudson). Like the N.W. course, Southwark's training is comprehensive – for stipendiary and non-stipendiary ordained ministry. Training for A.P.M. perpetuates the disastrous concept that whilst stipendiary ministry is the norm, non-stipendiary ministry is a stop-gap device for understaffed parishes. The term 'Auxiliary' is catastrophic and implies a 2-tier ordained ministry. Ordination denotes responsibility and all training is for this. Economics alone indicate that non-stipendiaries can expect to assume leadership of the church's mission in many areas.

6. Episcopalian Church of Scotland. (Aenoas Mackintosh). The myth is being exploded that an ordained man has all the gifts of ministry: this process disturbing for clergy and laity. Term 'auxiliary' not used. Training of non-stipendiaries with stipendiaries necessary for teamwork. Stipendiaries should not be expected to accept non-stipendiaries into old patterns of ministry. Termly review of syllabus with much assessment by men themselves and regular feedback. Parish support groups in operation with local rectors involved. Weekends for rectors; for wives.
7. Gloucester (David Nye). Residential element small. Swing to tutorial emphasis and reduction of lectures. Readers and women jointly trained with A.P.M. Concern that men can go through course with no effect on them.
8. Norwich. (James O'Byrne). Diocesan scheme completing 3 years. Reliance on individual tutors heavy because no institutional resources. No definite pattern of residential component yet, Merger with East Anglian scheme could develop.
9. East Midlands. (Alan Rogers, David Wilcox). First 3 years nearly complete. Adult Education Department of Nottingham was asked to set up the course – no other schemes looked at. Seven ordinands trained with 8 other men and 9 women – scheme not specific for ordinands.

Principles of training:-

Group method – all are teachers and learners.

Learning at student's pace. Skills of learning developed.

Education not seen as hurdle-race to winning post but as lifelong process.

Total coverage of syllabus not attempted.

Life-related approach to education – to be set within the environment.

Academic/pastoral dichotomy undesirable.

These methods ease tension between high motivation to ordination and low motivation to learning. 4 chaplains have oversight and visit families. Summer school rewarding. Concern over lack of local and Diocesan enthusiasm; wide area covered.

10. Oak Hill. (Geoffrey Shaw, Hugh Silvester). Aim traditional – training for priesthood as usually understood; A.P.M. and local parish context chiefly envisaged (Para.4.8 of Oak Hill paper on A.P.M.) Local pastoral tutors used. Yearly assessment involves D.D.O. and a moderator. Extension of scheme at Colchester.
11. Truro. (Martin Thornton). 8 residential weekends yearly. Summer residential period; local tutors. Stipendiaries are jack-of-all-trades; hence role for A.P.M.'s in specialization. Spirituality should be

central and the theological methodology of training pastoral throughout.

12. Methodist observer. (Ivor Jones). Methodism feared a 2-tier ministry of Conference stationed ministers and sector ministers. Only a few centres were used by Methodism for the training of ministers; a fortiori few acceptable for part-time training (N.W. course and West Midlands are used). Anxiety lest sector ministry depress lay leadership.

The Chief Secretary of ACCM had already pointed out some of the facilities available in the south-west region,⁵² and among these had highlighted the University of Exeter's theological department and the unofficial Chancellor's School at Truro. At initial discussions in October 1976, the Working Party had a debate as to what extent traditional academic standards should feature in the new Course, whilst, on a different front, it was decided also that there should not be an attempt to limit the proposed Course to one centre. No doubt this was because of sensitivities on the part of the Diocese of Truro whose Chancellor's School was an established training centre, albeit unofficial. As discussions progressed, a proposed relationship developed between the Course, the University of Exeter Department of Theology, and their Extra-Mural Department,⁵³ with the possibility of certain 'Course' staff being employed by the Extra Mural Department in order bring this about. It was envisaged that all students would be candidates for Non-Stipendiary Ministry. The possibility of a future call by the House of Bishops to train Stipendiary Candidates, as suggested by GSMisc57, The Guildford Report, was borne in mind but the assumption was made that additional residential facilities

⁵² Paper on 'Ordination Training in the South West', by Canon Hugh Melinsky, dated 28 August 1975, held in Working Party on Training file, SWMTC archives.

⁵³ See Working Party Minutes, April 1977, Working Party on Training file, SWMTC archives.

would need to be provided to meet such a requirement.⁵⁴ It was hoped that, once launched, the Course would have an average intake of ten students at each of three centres, each year i.e. an eventual student body of ninety ordinands.⁵⁵

It is obvious from studying the progress of these discussions that the effective partnership developing between the diocese of Exeter and Truro was largely driven by ACCM expectations,⁵⁶ however Truro seems to have been the more reluctant partner in overall integration of diocesan training requirements. In October 1977, a paper entitled 'Unfinished Business' listed the need for provision, in addition to ordination training, of the following:

1. Post Ordination Training.
2. In-service Training for the clergy.
3. Training for Women's Ministry.
4. Training for Readers.
5. Laity Training.
6. Pastoral Training.

But in the final Working Party 'Progress Report' of March 1978 it was recorded 'that the Diocese of Truro was willing to accept the scheme drawn up by the Working Party as the basis for its own NSP training, but was not intending to integrate that scheme with its training for other ministries'.

The 'Exeter/Truro NSM Scheme' was launched in autumn 1978, just a few months before the watershed to be described in the next chapter. It was unusual in

⁵⁴ See paper 'Notes on the Course', dated May 1977, Working Party on Training file, SWMTC archives.

⁵⁵ Working Party minutes, July 1977, Working Party on Training file, SWMTC archives.

⁵⁶ See, for example, Working Party Minutes, October 1972, Working Party on Training file, SWMTC archives.

that although on paper it was one Course, there were two Directors and sets of staff for the two dioceses. Unity was less in terms of visibility and structure, more in terms of purpose, syllabus and consultation.

Chapter 3: The Watershed of 1979

Although the last chapter demonstrated that the 1970's were a decade in which the initial network of Regional Theological Courses was both developed and completed, towards its end the principal driving force in that development had ceased to be the needs of the developing Non-Stipendiary Ministry, or even general educational theory, but instead the general economic climate of the country. It was a time of high inflation, and rapidly escalating bills for ordination training in the residential Colleges were causing much concern. The Report GS303, 'Theological Training: A Policy for the Future', of 1976 sought in its clause 14a to inspire some encouragement by setting the Church's training costs alongside those of other professions. In 1975 the annual training cost of an ordinand was said to be on average £815, compared with a social worker at £1,500, a teacher at £2,200, a doctor at £5000 and an RAF pilot at £100,000! By bleak contrast, a hurriedly put together supplementary report entitled GS315 'The Cost of Ordination Training' and published just five months later referred to inflation in Theological College fees of 18.7% between the academic year 1975/76 and 1976/77, expenditure from the Central Ordination Fund of £1,000,000 in 1978 compared with an approved estimate of £483,000 for 1977, and the exhaustion of all but £5,573 of reserves by 1 January 1978. In this context, the average annual fee of £347 for an ordinand in non-residential training compared with £1130 for residential looked very attractive indeed. In December 1976 ACCM therefore set up a Working Party on Courses 'to

evaluate the present quality and methods of ordination training, in the light of known and foreseeable financial circumstances'.¹

The Working Party was to report twice in the next year, publishing their GS Misc 62, 'ACCM: The First Report of the Working Party on Courses', in June 1977 and their GS359, 'ACCM: The Second Report of the Working Party on Courses', the following December. The finance-driven approach of the First Report was made abundantly clear in the Preface: 'The Advisory Council for the Church's Ministry shares the general anxiety of the Church at the increasing costs of ordination training. It reaffirms the Church's long-accepted commitment to the training of recommended candidates, but is anxious to explore any possibilities of reducing the cost of training without significant educational loss.' This general parameter was both amplified and made more explicit in paragraph 4 of the report, entitled 'Known and Foreseeable Financial Circumstances'. There the anxiety was defended and, whilst it was asserted that it would be 'shameful' if the nature and content of the training of ordinands were to be determined by finance to the exclusion of educational principles, the axiom was propounded that 'we can only enjoy what we can afford'. An estimate for the necessary level of ACCM grants for training, given status quo in the shape of the system was placed at £1,050,000 as a minimum figure or 'if the worst came to the worst' somewhere between £1,350,000 and £1,500,000. This was in addition to minimum costs for the training of lay workers of £58,000.

The First Report aimed not to comment in detail on the place of the Regional Theological Courses. This was reserved for the Second Report. But a number of opening issues were tabled as a basis for further thought. These issues, contained in paragraphs 27-29, were all intended to point to the possibility of

¹ ACCM Report in GS331, 'General Synod Annual Reports, 1976', para. 16.

training candidates for stipendiary ministry on a part time basis in order to save money. The concluding remarks of paragraph 30 amply demonstrate this intention:

... it should be noted that the cost of non-residential training is considerably less. While the average cost of residential training is £1,604 per year, the average cost of non-residential training is £475 per year. Moreover, non-residential training is sometimes paid for wholly by the candidate himself, while residential training usually involves heavy additional charges (though not from central church funds) for family maintenance. Even allowing for the fact that non-residential training is a year longer, it is still much cheaper.

It must be admitted that whilst finance was the driving issue behind the First Report, it was not the only live issue in the then debate about the appropriate shape of ordination training as it affected the Regional Courses. It was also noted that there was a clear difference between the Southwark and North-West Courses where it was possible to train for stipendiary ministry, and the rest, where it was not. It was reported that while most of the courses had been designed specifically for Auxiliary Pastoral Ministry training, and accordingly had sought recognition only for this, some were desirous to see this recognition extended to the stipendiary ministry as well. The fact that no reference was made to the serious educational deficiencies tabled at the November 1976 General Synod is perhaps an indication of the seriousness of the financial crisis: after all, with all reserves gone by the end of 1977 and no action taken, the only prospect would have been the non-payment of training bills from Colleges and Courses and a breakdown of training.

As it happened, in the short term the financial situation was alleviated in two ways in the summer of 1977. In the first place the House of Bishops decided to relax their requirements for the length of training, especially for graduate candidates, whilst in the July synod, the full minimum requirement of £1,050,000 was voted for ordination training for 1978.²

² ACCM Report in GS 366, 'General Synod Annual Reports, 1977', para.16.

Given what has already been highlighted about certain educational concerns over some of the Regional Courses, one might have thought that the removal of the immediate financial crisis would have indicated the desirability of allowing a little more time for the growth and development of the Regional Courses in their then present form before recommending wholesale change in ethos. After all, of those then existing, only one, Southwark, was more than seven years old. But this was not to be the case and GS359, 'The second report of the Working Party on Courses', made recommendations which were far-reaching. These included the validation of Courses for training for Stipendiary ministry with choice between College and Course being determined by the personal needs of each candidate.³

It is at this point in the proceedings that some divergence in opinion arises as to the importance of finances in leading following decisions. Mark Hodge, in his ACCM report commissioned by the House of Bishops had this to say in 1985:⁴

But the crisis passed after the agreement of the General Synod in July 1977 to allocate substantial additional funds towards the training budget. The financial pressures were thereby eased and do not appear to have been an important factor in the final discussions leading to the House of Bishops' decision.

The rationale of the decision rather lay in the perceived contradiction involved in recognition for training for stipendiary ministry having being given to only two courses, in the face of the assumed compatibility of standards in *all* selection and training for stipendiary and non-stipendiary ministry.

The House of Bishops' decision referred to will be returned to. But the point to be made is that the above ACCM retrospective conclusion about the lack of importance of financial issues post July 1977 does not do justice to the documentary evidence available. In fact there was a significant, continuing, concern over the cost

³ GS359 'ACCM: Second Report of the Working Party on Courses', paragraphs 63, 56.

⁴ Church of England Individual Title, 'Patterns of Ministerial Training in the theological colleges and courses', by Mark Hodge, p.87.

of training expressed by the Working Party, quite apart from the general concern abroad in the Church due to the continuing uncertain general economic climate. Hence two reasons were cited by the Working Party concerning its own self understanding post-July 1977. The first, contained in paragraph 8, was a continuing crisis 'in the strict sense of a time of judgement'. Reference was made to the need to assess all training as to whether it gave an educational quality which was worth the price. It was said that it had to be possible to assure parishes that were 'getting value for money' in educational terms. The belief was tabled that financial stringency had called into question some of the training which had been developed in a period of comparatively open budgets. There was a continuing need for evaluation of training 'in the light of known and foreseeable financial circumstances'. The second reason given by the Working Party, in paragraph 9, was the continuing financial urgency affecting the whole Church which was unchanged by the Synod vote for the training budget and which it was said would need time to resolve. The looming real possibility of there being 'simply not the money available' in 1980 was spelt out. The spectre of ordinands having to leave College and seek alternative employment was written in centre stage. The prospect of Diocesan Boards of Finance simply not having the will to pay what General Synod voted was tabled as a possible agenda item. There may have been mention of an 'overriding concern to secure a higher standard of ministerial training', but this was clearly set in the context of statements such as 'However unwelcome some economies may be, they are to be preferred to telling x hundred men and women that the central funds of the Church simply cannot pay their fees in full, in spite of our renewed [July General Synod] pledge to do so.'

There can be no doubt that those on the Working Party were striving to safeguard the best possible standard of ordination training for the Church. But equally there can be no doubt that the process involved the consideration, in the context of crisis, of every possible financial economy that could be made.

The Second Report did, of course, consider in its recommendations many other issues besides that of finance. Thus paragraph 15 detailed the fluidity of patterns of ministry, ordained and lay, in the Church of the day. Nor was it simply trying to recommend simply the cheapest form of training. Rather it could be said that where it was possible to highlight some educational benefit from a pattern of training which was cheaper, it did so. Hence a list of differing advantages of residential and non-residential training was produced (in paragraph 55), along with the assertion that the needs of every ordinand were different. The implication was that the (cheaper) pattern of non-residential training might well be educationally the better for some of them.

In support of this flexibility of approach, it was recommended that a more flexible scheme of training should be adopted to suit the individual needs of ordinands in the first instance, and that the first step in this direction should be the formation of a national network of non-residential training for stipendiary ministry. The basis for this was recommended to be the various courses then recognised for training for Non-Stipendiary ministry, of which it was said that some also wished to train men for stipendiary ministry, to join Southwark and the North West Ordination Course, but had hitherto been discouraged from doing so.

The Second Report was followed by resolutions in the House of Bishops in February 1978, reported in GS374, 'The Future of the Ministry', published in May. The latter mainly proposed a three year guarantee of stability for the Theological

Colleges but also included the following: '11.iv. That this House... recognises the need for the future consideration of the best ways of utilising all available resources and at diversifying the patterns of training, taking into account the recommendations of Bishop Tomkins' Working Party.'

The debate on 'The Future of the Ministry' took place in the July General Synod.⁵ The report was generally commended for its positive and optimistic note. But there were also a number of factors mentioned which might properly have mitigated against the immediate implementation of the Bishops' clause 11.iv referred to above. The training offered for Non-Stipendiary ministry by the Regional Courses was described by one speaker as⁶ 'by no means uniform at the moment and which could be in serious respects defective', resulting in ordinands who were, on completion of initial training, 'without the advantage of concentrated study and therefore to some extent imperfectly, inadequately and incompletely prepared'. There was said to be 'more weight and more substance in some of the courses undertaken by readers than in some of the courses at present engaged in by those preparing for non-stipendiary ministry'. Of course, as is always the case in lively debate, there were those who denied the assertions. But it could not be said that the debate overall represented a tacit declaration of confidence in the Regional Courses. In the light of this part of paragraph 57 of the Second Report seems crucial: 'Nonetheless ACCM should not recommend [part-time] courses for wider recognition until any reasonable suspicions of their adequacy have been removed, until there is at least one *full-time* member of staff, and until they have demonstrated the likelihood of their having a realistic number of students and of

⁵ Church of England (Reference works), *General Synod Proceedings* (London, Church House) Vol. 9, No. 2, pp.602-617 give the main discussions with a bearing on the Regional Courses.

⁶ *Proceedings*, Vol.9, No. 2, p.604.

their attaining the high all-round standards which are already apparent in SOC and NWOC.'

It is arguable that the last caveat was simply ignored. After the General Synod debate, ACCM cited 'powerful educational arguments' in favour of part-time courses as a valid means of training for stipendiary ministry.⁷ There is no evidence to suggest that such 'powerful educational arguments' did not consist solely of the shortlist quoted in para. 55 of the Second Report i.e. 'More opportunity to relate academic input to everyday life; more opportunity to share theological ideas with those unacquainted with language or unsympathetic to content; more opportunity to learn by doing; linking of spirituality with local church and secular world; continuing stimulus of secular world; less danger of institutionalisation; less upheaval to family and fewer moves.' But nowhere was there offered evidence for the truth of these arguments, which the evidence of Southwark students in the previous decade would suggest were less powerful than the confidence of the 1978 ACCM Report would assert.

After the Synod debate, ACCM recommended to the House of Bishops⁸ that 'all existing recognised non-residential courses should now be recognised for training candidates aged 30 and over for stipendiary ministry as well as for non-stipendiary ministry'. The section of ACCM's paper to the House of Bishops in January 1979 which is cited as containing the most forcible argument is quoted by Hodge.⁹ Not surprisingly the assertion is made that 'There is no reason in principle for refusing to train stipendiary ministers on non-residential courses.' But, most

⁷ Annual Report of ACCM in GS406, "General Synod Annual Reports 1978," p.3.

⁸ ACCM Report in GS406, p.4.

⁹ Hodge, *Patterns*, p.88.

surprisingly, the principal argument now given for this proposed step appears to be to ensure that non-stipendiary ministers trained on part-time Courses are not made to feel second class by the failure of their courses to train stipendiaries as well!

The House of Bishops acceded to ACCM's request. The verdict on this step, given by Hodge some six years later was as follows:¹⁰

It was, perhaps, an unusual step to validate twelve courses together in this way, particularly in view of that fact that a number of the courses did not conceive of themselves as offering suitable preparation to candidates for full-time, stipendiary ministry. Nor were they so regarded by the Courses and Examinations Sub-Committee.

Given that Hodge's research was not independent but commissioned by the House of Bishops, and given also that he was concentrating on educational issues, the epithet 'unusual' which he used to describe the House of Bishops decision might perhaps be better translated as 'extraordinary'. From 1979 and in the wake of a massive financial crisis, all the Regional Theological Courses were validated thenceforth for training for both non-stipendiary ministry and stipendiary ministry, whether they wanted to be or not.

¹⁰ Hodge, *Patterns*, p.87.

Chapter 4: An Introduction to Critical Questions

The history of the Regional Theological Courses as portrayed up to this point can be read in a most positive way. Taken together, they appear to be new Institutions, founded in an interesting variety of local circumstances, but with a common positive vision of service for the Church in offering ordination training on a local basis to those who for various reasons needed to undergo their training whilst retaining their home and (probably) employment.

The validation of all of the Courses in 1979 for the training of ordinands destined for full-time stipendiary ministry came, as has been shown, out of a time of financial uncertainty and with a view to some potential lightening of the cost burden to the Church of the overall commitment to ordination training. Nevertheless there was no sense within the Church's central establishment responsible for training that the step taken was going to result in future educational ineffectiveness. Indeed there were those who saw positive advantages for all in the part-time mode of training offered by the Regional Courses, in ways already referred to. In addition, whilst in 1979 there were Courses which did not see themselves as catering for candidates for the full-time stipendiary ministry, there were others, such as the East Midlands Course, which were already applying to join the ranks of Southwark and the North West Course, which had always done so.

It would, therefore, be possible to present the post-1979 history of the Courses as one of continuing development of a new and effective way of training all categories of clergy, listing educational and organisational developments and the

distinctive features of each Course with the implicit assumption that each is valued by the whole Church as a different but fully valid and effective vehicle for the training of all ordinands. But to do so would be to ignore the terms under which in 1979 all the Courses were validated for the training of those intending stipendiary ministry, and it would be to ignore the voices of many in the Church today who are either educators or who have experienced the Courses at first hand, or who have supervised those who have.

The letter which was received by the Courses about their new validation was written by John Tiller and dated 7 February 1979. Appended to it was the document HB(79)1 dated December 1978, 'The Recognition of Non-Residential Courses for Training for Stipendiary Ministry' and Appendix A to HB(79)1 which deals with issues of compatibility and standards. None of these is marked 'confidential.'

Whilst in its context this documentation can be understood, in hindsight parts of it can be seen to have been seriously flawed. In particular the comments on comparability between part-time Courses and residential Colleges need to be viewed with a critical eye. The argument in this document relies on the assertion that Courses are comparable with Colleges, because while there is less time available for study on a Course, there will be both a greater commitment on the part of students and also those students will bring with them their life experiences. But the argument about commitment is an unwarranted generalisation, emotive but without foundation. With regard to life experiences, it is ridiculous to assert that a thirty year old attending a Course will bring his life experience to bear during his or her training whilst the same person attending a College will somehow contrive to forget all that he or she has experienced of the world or alternatively find it

impossible to make the connections with the training programme which would otherwise have been possible.

The above being the case, one is left with the statement that 'Three years of non-residential training is the rough equivalent of half the study hours available in two years of residential training (the time demanded of the over-30's).' The question has to be, 'Does this matter?' If it does not matter then it would be prudent for the Church to halve the study hours for all its ordinands and thereby save a considerable amount of money. If on the other hand it does matter, then someone who trains part time must usually at the point of ordination be less well equipped to do the job.

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, it may be counter-argued that in the general world of training and employment, there are now many different established educational routes available for the gaining of qualifications. It may be, however, that there is a tendency on the part of the Church to underrate the knowledge, skills and spiritual commitment necessary for the conduct of effective ministry as a member of the clergy. Whilst it is true that there are many different routes by which one can become entitled to place the letters 'B.A.' after one's name, there is no scheme in this country whereby one can train to be a surgeon whilst continuing in full-time employment as a deputy-headteacher – nor is there likely to be so!

It has sometimes been argued that since it's not possible to teach a person everything that he or she will need for the rest of a lifetime's ministry, during initial theological education, what should be concentrated on is the inculcation of a theological method to resource the future minister to face the challenges he or she will need to tackle in the future. There is much to be said for this argument. But

even if it were to be the case that part-time training were reliable in the establishment of this, the effect of a 'half study hours' training at the point of ordination must surely mitigate strongly against the notion of comparable equipment for ministry.

In the light of all the above, a number of initial inquiries were undertaken in order to try and establish some of the individual issues concerning theological training on Courses which might indicate criteria against which a fuller evaluation of their effectiveness in the training of clergy for the Church of England could be undertaken. A series of informal interviews was held during the period 1999-2001 with a number of different individuals, all of whom could be expected to bring an informed opinion to bear on this matter.

The Venerable Gordon Kuhrt, Director of Ministry at the Ministry Division, was extremely helpful in discussing the Courses generally, but understandably bound by the issues of confidentiality about most current specific details. He did, however, table one major issue concerning staffing levels. If a Theological College has a student body of seventy to eighty, there will be seven or eight full time tutorial staff, based on a ratio of one staff member to every ten students. Courses, however, cannot afford this level of staffing, and the minimum core full-time staff for the same student body would be only three. Although in mitigation there is use made of guest lecturers and tutors, nevertheless there is the inescapable question, 'How can three tutors teach as well as eight tutors all areas of the syllabus?' As well as this general issue, reference was also made to a specific curriculum issue, namely the debate as to whether Missiology should be a discrete subject area, or whether it should pervade the entire curriculum, or both; the question being whether in

relevant cases, people 'deliver on' the promise that Missiological issues pervade all parts of the Course.

A different issue emerged from discussion with the Rev Dr. David Way, Secretary of the Theological Education and Training Committee. Given the requirement that Regional Courses should cater for the candidates from the whole of the theological spectrum, but also give the recent growth in the Evangelical wing of the Church of England, he questioned whether it is possible for Evangelicals and Anglo-Catholics to find 'a home' in the Courses.

The Bishop of Durham, interviewed in the capacity of Chair of the Ministry Division, confirmed that the cost of training was an item for continued monitoring by the Church, along with decisions as to the appropriate modes of training for emerging new varieties of ministry. He confirmed that there existed in some quarters presumed quality differences between full time College training and part time Courses. In terms of qualities of the Regional Courses which remain to be established, he spoke firstly of their manner of encouraging priestly formation, secondly of their effectiveness in inculcating both enthusiasm and tools for ministry (principally thorough knowledge of right 'sources'), and thirdly of their suitability as a training for the future front rank of the Church's ministry (as against the breadth of candidates). (It is to be emphasised that this was not a list of criticisms, rather a list of live issues. The Bishop made it clear that had it been Colleges under discussion, there would have been other issues raised, for example their ability to deliver a training relevantly rooted in the culture of today.)

The Bishop of Chichester was approached as the then senior serving Bishop in the Church of England and as having a distinctive academic theological background. One major issue which he highlighted was the problem of identifying,

agreeing and co-ordinating the best resource centres to serve a course whose essence is to be truly Regional. He also noted a past reservation with regard to the Course serving the Chichester diocese, namely that the coverage of the Gospels had been too scanty. When asked if he was satisfied with the then present curriculum, he indicated his confidence in the reliability of the members of the Board of Studies. Two other general concerns were noted, firstly the time and expense involved in the amount of travelling expected of students, and secondly the lack of a strong sense of community among them.

Perhaps the most widespread range of issues was raised by an experienced Diocesan Director of Ordinands who had supervised many ordinands whilst training on a Regional Course, and who had also had experience of teaching at a Theological College.

Firstly he highlighted the problem of Courses having to cater for a wide spectrum of theological tradition among candidates from more than one (and possibly several) dioceses. This is very different from the previous custom within the Church of England, i.e. that of training individuals in institutions with distinctive and different theological traditions. On Courses this can lead to students feeling 'pushed' to disregard their own tradition, and especially those of Anglo-Catholic or Evangelical background. Part of this seems to be due to the difficulty of creating a core staff big enough for all students to find people to relate to. Put statistically, each student on a Course is likely to find that either one of the Course staff or none of the Course staff understands them!

Secondly the issue of ecumenicity was raised. Rightly Methodist and United Reformed Church oversight bodies need to be assured that their candidates are not treated as 'crypto-Anglicans'. But in the context of limited contact time, the

ecumenical dimension can be seen as causing a dilution of the need for a distinctively Church of England formation.

Thirdly, and again in relation to formation issues and churchmanship, because of gaps between the expectations of a Course representing the whole church, and students from a particular tradition, it is possible for students simply to 'switch off' from the formational aspects which are offered, and to rely on their own parish priest instead. Thus the Course can be in danger of producing the opposite of what it intends – resulting in a more, rather than less, parochial and insular model of ministry.

Fourthly, with regard to the curriculum, the attempt to cover too much within the time available was referred to. A wide range of requirements exist for the training process, but the attempt to tackle all of them can result in people who complete initial training being relatively able in certain skill areas such as counselling, but with alarming gaps in the fundamental building blocks of knowledge of the Bible and Christian doctrine. An instance was cited (now corrected) of students studying one Gospel only and being told that the insight they had learned needed to be applied to the other three. It is important to note that the implied criticism here was not to do with the breadth of skills, needed by the newly ordained, but rather to do with the order in which they are given priority, it being asserted that initial training is the place for greater emphasis on the fundamentals already cited.

Finally, there was some discussion of an evaluation process which the particular diocese had then recently held in conjunction with both junior clergy and training incumbents. Among issues associated with training through both Colleges

and Courses, the training incumbents had highlighted the particular concern, with respect to Courses, of insufficient attention being paid to Biblical studies.

Two further interviews were held, but by contrast with the above they were with people who had recently completed training on Regional Theological Courses and therefore were able to speak from a student perspective. Both were from a Church of England initial background. One had previous theological qualifications, and had spent some time as a tutor of an Anglican Theological College during a period of overseas service. He was particularly in a position to evaluate his experience from a theological perspective. The other was a university Professor in another discipline and therefore in a particular position to evaluate his experiences from an adult educational point of view.

The first of the interviewees mentioned a number of issues of considerable concern, but also some most praise worthy aspects of his experience. For instance, he had a high regard for the flexibility of his particular Course in devising an individual programme of studies to take into account his previous background and qualifications. Also he was impressed by the high profile of worship which characterised each residential element of the course timetable, and spoke well of the encouragement to engage in prayer on the same occasions.

Having said the above, there were also a number of points mentioned which would be worthy of further investigation and review. The first was to do with the range of teaching standards among core staff, half of whom were said to lack training in educational techniques and to have communication problems. This was not to say that those concerned were not good personal or pastoral tutors, but nevertheless the effective training of tutors in technique was cited as being the most desirable positive improvement. The second point related to the pressure on contact

time and the fact that with time limited on each individual course or module there will be a marked tendency to opt for the personal interests of the tutor concerned. In this connection a distinction was made between subject matter taught in an interesting way but not necessarily a helpful way, the obvious instance being a course in theology (doctrine) in which the strong emphasis was upon post modern issues to the detriment of an understanding of the traditional theology of the Church. Indeed the assertion was, in connection with the time problem, that a 'part-time' course can never provide for busy people the opportunity adequately to cover everything needed in a way such that most students will feel happy and on top of what they are doing. A new compulsory longer residential element was seen as essential. At the moment Regional Courses are understood as the opposite of an 'ivory tower' approach to doing theology. But with the time pressures on individual students it was asserted that it was highly questionable whether the strains of daily living allowed much thought and working through of theological issues at all.

On a very different tack, and in relation to issues of churchmanship, there was felt to be an overwhelming and unnecessary liberal emphasis to the Course which was inappropriate academically. For instance in a particular year group, the largest churchmanship group was Evangelical. These students were driven to defensiveness when, instead of being helped to a critical appreciation of their tradition, their ideas were written off as untenable and simplistic by the tutors. Other problems highlighted were the exclusion of evangelism from taught ideas of mission, dramatically varying academic standards on residential weekends according to the differing visiting tutors and, on completion of initial training, the fact that post-ordination training took no account of whether Course or College had been attended.

Naturally the above observations relate to only one of the Regional Courses at one particular time, but from an experienced theological educator who has lived the 'student experience' they do represent a perspective that is worthy of attention, perhaps as much as Bishops' Inspections which inevitably can also only consider a snapshot view of Course life. The same can also be said of the following professor's experiences in attending a different Course.

In this second testimony of student experience there is perhaps the most critical set of observations of the whole sample. But again these are based on an approach wishing to give praise where due, and so it was stated at the outset that the particular Course was highly commendable in its introductory weeks in welcoming people from a wide variety of backgrounds and prior learning and in its ability to assume no prior knowledge of the subject matter and then to build from that appropriately. It was also noted that the general standard of teaching on the part of midweek lecturers was extremely high, most showing evidence of thorough preparation and presentation at the right level of detail.

Having said that, the study of the Synoptic Gospels within the first year course was demonstrated as highly unsatisfactory. The lecturer was tackling the Gospel of Mark but after expounding a few verses was sidelined, following the question of one student, into a study of Isaiah. The majority of the contact time for that module was then spent treating Isaiah, leaving students at the end of the year with virtually 'zero knowledge' of the intended syllabus. In practice there was said to be little formal assessment of student satisfaction and in any case the reasonable point was made that at the beginning of a course students do not have enough knowledge to complain, but rather assume that things will develop and fit in as the course progresses. No peer observation among lecturers was witnessed at any stage,

and there was reported to be no way in which an outside validating authority could realise that the syllabus was not being delivered. Indeed, with regard to another subject area, it was said, 'Whilst a Course can describe on paper what it's purporting to do, how it actually delivers it is a completely different thing altogether.'

In the second year of this Course a major problem was encountered in connection with the study of the historical Jesus. No credence was given to views other than that asserting the Gospels to be in the main theological construction rather than straightforward testimony. This was felt to reflect strongly the lecturer's own viewpoint and was highly destructive to the faith of many students.

Whilst the general standard of midweek lecturing was good, there was no tutorial or seminar provision. 'In higher education, to have teaching which is simply "chalk and talk" isn't good enough.' Residential weekends were of very variable quality, frequently poor, and one case was reported of 'zero substantive input'. Again there was no observation of the guest speakers by Course staff. The assessment scheme was changed part way through the course and much distress was caused as core staff refused to inform students of the results of remarking all of their past work.

There was much criticism of the lack of training for the actual job of ministry, the equivalent of 'day 1 at the office' in the secular world. It was felt that some of the weekend topics were irrelevant to this and perhaps included to interest the substantial number of students enrolled on the Course for private interest purposes. It was felt that valuable opportunities were missed for tackling the praxis of ministry. In answer to the assertion that the main strength of Regional Theological Courses is their ability to train people to do theology in context, the

response was an emphatic 'NO'. The limitations on time on the part of students was referred to, and also the almost complete absence of practical applications. The interviewee did not believe that the Course was being accurate in including the words, 'Ministry Training' in its title.

A particular example of the latter concern was in connection with the study of liturgy, which appeared to have been hardly existent. A request was made for some teaching on the theology of the funeral service and 'they were at a complete loss. They did say "Well, we might get someone in to talk to you about that" – but that promise was never fulfilled.' Another failure was in suggesting routes from theology to the practical text of a sermon. Here the interviewee dared to state an opinion: 'I felt there was a fear of doing that. It may be it's because the Principal and Vice-Principal have been out of parish ministry for many, many years and it exposes them if they have practical courses – because what is going to be their input?' Finally it was alleged that a year of students had been awarded Masters degrees without having been registered for a Masters degree programme.

The evidence and opinions cited in this chapter constitute observations by people who at the time of interview had current or very recent close connection with the Courses. Naturally there will by now have been some development on each of the Courses in some of the areas referred to. No doubt also many of the points made will also have been cited in Bishops Inspection Reports, which carry an embargo, for reasons of confidentiality, of thirty years. Whatever the situation 'behind the scenes,' and whatever progress may have been made within the last five years, there are clear public concerns to be addressed.

Chapter 5: Interviews with Principals

All theologians and ministers of the Christian faith will develop different personal emphases in their individual understanding of the Gospel and will also, when called upon to teach, vary correspondingly in their approach to, and discharge of, their duties. It is a long-standing concern of the Church that in the context of a small institution the principal can exercise a dominating personal influence. The small size of Regional Course core staffs relative to those of the residential Colleges would indicate that this issue could be even more acute for the former.

During the academic year 2000-2001 the author of this thesis conducted an interview with either the Principal or the person acting for the Principal of each of the Regional Courses. Details of dates and individual personnel are given in the notes.¹ Tapes or detailed notes of each conversation are also available. The general objective of these interviews was to inquire about the personal emphases and enthusiasms of each individual and to record something of the perceived strengths

¹ Details of interviews undertaken and evidence supplied.
Table 5/1

Course	Date	Person	Position	Evidence
CBDTI	28/9/00	Rev. Canon Tim Herbert	Principal	Notes
WEMTC	3/10/00	Rev. Dr. Richard Clutterbuck	Principal	Notes
NOC	3/1/01	Rev. Dr. Chris Burdon	Principal	Notes
EAMTC	28/3/01	Rev. Dr. Malcolm Brown	Principal	Notes
STETS	4/5/01	Rev. Dr. David Holgate	Acting Principal	Tape
WMMTC	8/5/01	Rev. Dr. Dennis Stamps	Principal	Tape
SAOMC	21/5/01	Rev. Dr. Mike Butterworth	Principal	Tape
NEOC	31/5/01	Rev. Canon Trevor Pitt	Principal	Tape
EMMTC	21/6/01	Rev. Michael Taylor	Principal	Tape
SWMTC	28/6/01	Rev. Dr. David Hewlett	Principal	Tape
SEITE	2/7/01	Brother Patrick Moore	Assistant Principal	Tape
NTMTC	3/7/01	Rev. David Sceats	Principal	Tape

All subsequent notes are given in the form NTMTC (p.10), the page number referring either to the original interview notes, or tape transcript as appropriate.

and weaknesses of the task at hand. A full academic interview was not available in all cases; nevertheless important evidence was gathered.

Since the Regional Courses offer an alternative mode of training to the Colleges for many ordinands, comparisons cannot be avoided in any evaluation of the theological training they provide. As the most recent mode to be developed, the effectiveness of that development also cannot be evaluated without reference to the alternative previously available. One of the prime issues for discussion was therefore, the general advantages and disadvantages of Course-based training against College training. Individuals were also asked if they had an opinion as to which pattern was to be generally preferred for students for whom there currently exists a choice.

Of all the interviews, the Principal of EAMTC objected the most strongly to the perceived taxonomy of comparison with Colleges.² He saw the quality of their output of trained students as equal in all respects to College-trained students, but with certain differences. EAMTC - students could be typified as being 'argumentative but not party people', in common with NOC. They were also generally older than College students and containing a smaller proportion of possible theological educators. The principal advantage of the College was seen to be the ability to immerse students in a particular theological tradition,³ whereas Course students were of necessity immersed in the dialogue between traditions. Both modes of training were seen as valuable within the mixed economy currently available within the Church. A further advantage of the Course was identified as being the obtaining of better than expected results from less confident candidates,

² EAMTC (p.7).

³ EAMTC (p.1).

whilst a disadvantage was seen to be a tendency to congregationalism caused by so much of the practical training being based in the home parish.⁴

In spite of the protests at being compared with Colleges, the overall awareness of advantages and disadvantages for the Principal of EAMTC was a measure of considered balance. By contrast the Principals of NEOC and NTMTC were strongly in favour of the Course as the better mode of training. NEOC's opinion was that its Course was to be considered neither non-residential, there being a total of nearly one month in each year spent in residence, nor part-time. The reasoning for the latter was that the Course enabled the student to do most of his or her learning first-hand in the context of the whole pattern of ordinary life.⁵ There was seen to be no academic disadvantage in Course training, although this perception was based on the experience of the Course intake being generally already well-qualified.⁶ NTMTC's opinion was that the Course mode of training was that which 'did the job properly',⁷ the main reason being again that of contextualisation. Having had first hand experience of teaching both in residential and non-residential situations, the Principal described the typical student experience as that of learning *about* theology in a College but *doing* theology on a Course.

The following critique of Theological Colleges was offered to complement this opinion: '... a lot of traditional assumptions that were made, and still are made I think about residential training – that it's a good thing for there to be a clean break between the past and the future, and that it's a good thing for people to be taken out of their own parish and put somewhere else, and it's a good thing for people no

⁴ EAMTC (p.8).

⁵ NEOC (p.1).

⁶ NEOC (p.4).

⁷ NTMTC (p.1).

longer to have the occupations and preoccupations and concerns that they had in their job beforehand – a lot of these models it seems to me come out of a fundamentally flawed theology of mission, and a flawed theology therefore of ministry and of God's relationship with the world. So there's a sense in which I think non-residential part-time training offers ways of being much more intentional about the rootedness of theology in everyday life and the relationship between being and doing.'⁸

In mitigation of the above strong representation, there was, however, an awareness that non-residential training is more suited to older students who can bring more into their training by way of prior learning and experience. It was also asserted that Colleges do a good job of training young people straight from university, and that they are much better at training academic theologians.⁹

The admission from a Course that 'we're not *ever* I think going to produce someone from here who is a New Testament scholar, for example, or a specialist in ecclesiology',¹⁰ must form a strong (if unintentional) counter-argument to the benefits of Course training previously propounded. If it is impossible to produce an academic theologian on the basis of what is taught on a Course, whereas it is possible to produce one on the basis of what is taught in a College, that inevitably points to a limitedness, or shallowness to the academic content of what is on offer. The key to effective theological praxis is the application of theological principles in practical situations. Shallowness in academic theology must inevitably lead to as

⁸ NTMTC (pp.1-2).

⁹ NTMTC (p.5).

¹⁰ NTMTC (p.5).

much lack of effectiveness in the sphere of good practical theology as it does in the realm of academic research and teaching.

The Principal of WEMTC believed that Courses can equip people for full-time stipendiary ministry as well as Colleges, but introduced an important caveat, namely the increasing awareness in the Church of the need for Continuing Ministerial Education so that some training areas can be dealt with whilst in ministry rather than during initial training.¹¹

A number of Principals seemed to be keenly aware of difficulties experienced by students training on Courses which lead to disadvantages in the mode of training. A difficulty can be an advantage if it leads to better learning, but not otherwise. The Principal of SAOMC, for instance, accepted that the major strength of Course training was the ability and requirement for the student to relate to his or her learning to application in the church and daily living. But there was also an awareness of the major disadvantage about the lack of time for students to study in depth.¹² Courses were said to offer a more general understanding and more practically-oriented learning and to be better for those students who sought this approach. But a College was thought to be the place for the student who wished to consider an area of theological study in depth; perhaps to learn Greek or Hebrew or to read the Fathers first-hand.¹³ The phrase 'scratching the surface' was used about Courses.

'Scratching the surface' was also used by the Principal of CBDTI who thought nevertheless that the awareness on the part of the student that he or she did

¹¹ WEMTC (pp.2-3).

¹² SAOMC (p.6).

¹³ SAOMC (p.9).

not 'know it all' could be a strength. He identified a danger among College-trained individuals of studying *more*, but thinking they then know it *all*, which could be a very negative factor. Alongside the disadvantage of Course training due to lack of substance in the curriculum, he also identified (admittedly in the context of the Regional Course with the smallest student body), a tendency among some to inappropriate individualism in their approach to ministry.¹⁴

The Assistant Principal of SEITE named the integration of theological principles to practical daily living of necessity as being the greatest advantage to Course training. Uniquely though, he cited the stress caused to part-time students as being the next most helpful thing, creating an empathy with the highly stressed lives of many members of congregations in the modern age.¹⁵ Against these advantages he highlighted the strong disadvantage of students having too little personal time to absorb the large amount of information being presented to them. The busyness of keeping up with working life, family commitments and Course work was said frequently to mitigate against the existence of personal 'open-space' for reflection and assimilation. Also the same busyness was said to sap the energy required for such reflection should the time ever happen to become available.

One of the features about Courses to have emerged from the above is clearly the need for the student to engage in his or her study alongside the normal activity of the rest of life. One of the major features of the Christian tradition generally has been the place of going apart for some in order to gain time to reflect and pray. The principal of NOC drew attention to the area of spirituality in connection with

¹⁴ CBDTI (p.5,7).

¹⁵ SEITE (pp.12-13).

Course limitations, and made the point that what a Course cannot do is *immerse* a student in the practice of spirituality, for example the Daily Office.¹⁶

The Acting Principal of STETS proved an enthusiast for Course type education and was prepared to say that 'for the purpose of training people for mission and ministry, a Course which has a rhythm of gathering and then dispersing, of doing things bit by bit alongside the realities of life, is close to being the best way'.¹⁷ But there was also an awareness of a number of practical disadvantages. Limits to time and the tiredness which comes from having to study on top of the demands of a working life have already been alluded to. One practical disadvantage not mentioned so far was the difficulty that students were likely to experience in gaining access to books for general browsing or reading around a subject. There was a related frustration also cited, arising when a student became excited about an individual topic but was forced by 'the system' to just touch on it briefly before moving on to the next topic.¹⁸ The importance of integration in the curriculum was emphasised so that students could return to particular issues at various stages of their course. But the language used was in terms of coping with disadvantage rather than mitigating or overcoming it.

The Principal of WMMTC added one specific advantage of Course training to the list already discussed, namely the ability of Courses better to draw upon the ministry and life experiences of students to date as a resource for learning. But he also added the specific disadvantage of lack of contact time between students and staff, which was said particularly to mitigate against the possibility of impromptu

¹⁶ NOC (p.5).

¹⁷ STETS (p.3).

¹⁸ STETS (pp.2-3).

type discussions about theological issues. The particular thrust of his assessment, however, was the need neither to place greater emphasis on College nor Courses, but rather to start with a careful assessment of the personal needs of each individual student. In support of this certain evidence was referred to which pointed to there being a wider diversity of personality types now present in ordinands than had been the case when only College training was available.¹⁹ This was said to be due to different people coming forward for ministry in confidence that suitable training would be available.

The needs of individuals was the main emphasis, too, of the Principal of SWMTC who cited Theological Colleges as being the better option for those who had not so far in life experienced, but wished to experience, the collegiate or university environment. The opportunity for some students to experience immersion in institutional life was felt to be an important developmental issue. The need for some individuals to be able to give up what they have been doing in order to devote themselves wholly to a new thing, was also put forward. Weighted against this, on the other hand, was the need of other students to remain in some sort of ownership and control of their own learning, not to become suddenly dependant on other people, such as College staff, determining what the shape of their day would be. For some students over thirty the time of transition taken in settling into an institution can effectively further reduce a two-year course already seen as inadequate in length of time for reasons of formation. Personal factors such as domestic arrangements and children's schooling were cited as practical reasons which would probably be definitive in any decision between the two basic modes of training.²⁰

¹⁹ STETS (pp.3-4).

²⁰ SWMTC (pp.2-3).

The principal of EMMTC was unwilling to discuss specific advantages and disadvantages associated with Courses and Colleges, in any generic way. Rather his whole emphasis was on listening to the story of the individual potential student and helping that individual to find his or her way through the choice to be made. There was obviously acceptance of differences because '... in some instances it would be a great deal more formationally effective that they're on a Course, and in some instances in a College,...'. But the main emphasis was of not being 'at all at ease with the notion of blanket solutions' in this area of discussion.²¹ There was the assertion that 'the standards which the central church lays down on its training institutions are comparable. The Courses are not given a different set of expectations than Colleges are.'²² In this context the important evidence about differing amounts of contact time, which has been freely admitted by central Church authorities was not pursued!

It can be seen from the above that in the driving seats of the Regional Theological Courses are people with a wide variety of understanding concerning the critical assessment of the general effectiveness of the Course mode of training. No-one was represented, understandably, who thought that Courses were ineffective in training all individuals. But among the opinions represented were those that Courses are generally the most effective, that both can be effective given different people and different circumstances, and that there should be no general differentiation. All these opinions cannot be right, and indeed it could be asserted that given their contrasting nature, some must represent misunderstanding.

²¹ EMMTC (p.6).

²² EMMTC (p.7).

Further information from Course Principals will be referred to later, in the chapter commenting on more detailed curriculum issues. Whilst it would be invidious and inappropriate to comment on the individual views expressed above in a critical way, it is still important to make some form of analytical comment on the people generally who are acting as Principals of the Regional Courses. Each person has been chosen by the Council or Governors of the respective Course as being the best available to fulfil the needs of the post at the relevant time. Since the greatest strength of Regional Courses on the evidence obtained is the doing of theology in a local context, and since the greater number of Course students will, when ordained, be performing a church-based ministry, it is perhaps helpful to see the amount of practical church-based experience possessed in general by such office holders.

The following figures are derived from the 2000/2001 and 2002/2003 editions of *Crockfords*. They reflect the situation when the interviews took place. Individuals are not here identified but the figures have been derived by tracing the records of those concerned.

Of the twelve Course Principals, four had no experience of Incumbent Status posts; a further two had been Team Vicars. Only five had had experience of full-time parish leadership as Vicar, Rector or Team Rector, with figures of 8, 3, 8, 3 and 7 years. The average experience of being in full-time overall leadership of a parish was thus only 2 years 5 months. This was in marked contrast to the situation with the English Colleges, in which of the eleven, two principals had no experience of incumbent status. However all the rest had had full-time overall leadership of a parish, with the length of service being 4, 9, 4, 11, 10, 7, 6, 9 and 10 years. This gives an average for all College principals of 6 years 4 months.

It could be asserted that it is an unusual phenomenon, to say the least, that the Regional Courses which are reputed to have as their greatest strength the ability to help students do their theology in practical situations, have as their leaders people who, on average, are far less likely to have had substantial experience of the practical issues of parish leadership than their College counterparts. Indeed, given the undoubted influence of the principal over the ethos and life of each institution, there is the basis of a strong argument that the potential student who wishes to learn the skills of effective parochial ministry should seriously consider the residential option where the gathered wisdom may be greater. Even given the possibility of drawing different conclusions from the data, the notable mismatch between the working experiences of the two categories of principal is a situation which should be reflected on by the wider church.

Chapter 6: Central Church Reports and Debates 1979 – 2000

We now return to a consideration of those central Church debates and developments which were to shape both the distribution and curricula of the Regional Courses during that period after 1979, when they were established as a direct alternative to the residential Colleges in training for all forms of ordained ministry, to which the issues introduced in the preceding two chapters apply.

In their Annual Report for 1980,¹ ACCM reported that ‘the ten-year task of developing a network of regional courses for the non-residential training of candidates for ministry’ had been completed, ‘with the recognition of the Carlisle Diocesan Training Institute’. From henceforward it would be theoretically possible for candidates living anywhere in England to train part-time for the Non-Stipendiary, or Stipendiary ministry if they so wished, from the base of their own home. Table 6/1 indicates the numbers of students in total registered with each of the Courses during the two decades covered by this chapter. At all stages, the numbers of women are included within the figures shown whether in their capacity as trainee deaconesses, permanent deacons or deacons intending priesthood. The table can be used as a reference point when considering the educational and organisational changes mentioned in the following text, and when considering the histories of the individual Courses which are described in the next chapter. The figures are all compiled from the various annual reports of ACCM, ABM and the Ministry Division and / or the tables of ministry statistics published by them. Full

¹ Contained in GS 482, ‘General Synod Annual Reports 1980’, p.9.

details of these will be found in Bibliography 2. The overall picture is of a stable number of students (averaging 389) training on Courses from 1980 through to 1994, from which date the numbers rose rapidly by some 50% over five years.

If the decade and a half following the 1979 watershed described in chapter 3 was characterised by stability in the numbers attending the Regional Courses overall, it was nevertheless a time of continuing change and development in what each Course was expected to do to achieve the satisfactory discharge of Initial Theological Education for each student. In addition, there was to come a round of significant re-organisation concerning the manner of provision for the different dioceses by the overall distribution of Courses.

No major changes affecting the Courses were recorded in the ACCM Report for 1981² or that for 1982.³ The 1982 Report does, however, note that a major report was in preparation about the general future strategy for the Church's ministry. Another publication in the same year concerning educational method⁴ also flagged a problem which was to increase over the next twenty years to the point where it would be suggested that initial theological training could no longer be completed by the time of ordination.⁵

² GS 526A, 'ACCM Annual Report for 1981.'

³ GS 564A, 'ACCM Annual Report for 1982.'

⁴ ACCM Occasional Paper No.11, 'Learning and Teaching in Theological Education', 1982, para. 8.

⁵ One of the suggestions in Church of England individual title 'The Structure and Funding of Ordination Training (The interim report of the working party set up by the Archbishops' Council)', February 2002.

Table 6/1 Total numbers in training on the Regional Courses. (Including stipendiary and non-stipendiary, men and women (including deacons and permanent deacon candidates where relevant), but excluding LNSM candidates)

Course	Year																				
	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
CDTI	3	Not Avail	5	4	7	8	7	12	15	13	11	8	10	9	15						
CBDTI		-														13	15	12	13	17	
NWOC		-																			
NOC	59	-	58	64	65	63	59	52	49	52	56	52	60	58	65	60	68	66	73	65	
NEOC	12	-	26	26	22	26	21	16	18	28	24	24	29	26	24	20	20	22	28	35	
WMMTC	33	-	25	25	27	19	28	26	40	43	34	26	26	24	18	21	33	36	31	26	
EMMTC	20	-	17	42	30	28	31	28	21	18	14	18	19	20	17	27	30	36	28	34	
EAMTC	20	-	23	20	19	20	25	25	23	25	26	26	23	23	42	46	58	47	62	72	
GLOUC	14	-	16	12	6	22	25	15	8	7	10	11									
BRIS		-	-	13	11	11	-	2	-	-											
WEMTC		-											14	15	18	24	19	24	36	36	
SAMTS	10	-	11	15	12	7	8	5	3	3	4	6	5	-							
OMC	23	-	21	20	20	23	21	20	22	26	31	32	32	33							
SAOMC		-													38	62	78	86	76	70	
OH	22	-	21	20	19	20	22	25	21	26	22	29	33	38							
NTMTC		-													37	50	51	49	42	34	
EX / TRURO	23	-	13																		
SWMTC		-		21	20	17	18	14	10	11	5	13	22	21	22	26	30	24	20	23	
SDMTS	54	-	68	59	62	59	60	54	68	72	68	70	71	75	68						
STS		-																			
STETS		-														71	82	82	84	91	
CSM	15	-	20	18	21	16	17	17	19	22	17	16	17	16							
SOC	40	-	42	41	50	51	52	50	48	50	42	37	33	40							
SEITE		-													54	55	51	68	76	86	
Other	45	-	10	3	5	6	10	6	6	3	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	24	2	2	
Total	393	-	376	403	396	396	404	367	371	399	365	369	394	398	418	475	535	576	571	591	
[Total Colleges	803	-	878	860	826	865	929	901	834	778	761	761	749	679	631	542	512	533	601	638]	

We wish to draw attention to a further problem. The introduction of new areas of study into the syllabuses of theological colleges and courses has raised the question of choosing between a general survey of a subject or of a specific study of a particular area. This is a problem with which religious studies departments in universities and colleges have had to wrestle as their courses have expanded beyond the traditional disciplines of theological study.

Because of the lesser study time available on the Regional Courses, this issue would have significant impact on their curriculum for traditional areas such as Biblical Studies and Christian Doctrine.

Some attempt to address the above issue was covered in ACCM Occasional Paper No. 15, 'An Integrating Theology', published the following year,⁶ in which Peter Baelz, the Dean of Durham, made a plea for more integration in the general approach to theological education, on a thematic basis, as an alternative to the proliferation of separate strands or avenues of study which tended not to be related to each other. This was a suggestion to be taken up quite widely in subsequent years by the Regional Courses especially, in an effort to save time. Unfortunately the methodology is subject to the basic criticism that it is difficult to apply knowledge effectively to a theological theme which one has not first learned independently, for its own sake. The effect of such an approach will be seen in chapter 14, where the adoption of such a pattern⁷ eventually resulted in the lowest student rating in the crucial area of Biblical Studies. Nevertheless, it was an attempt to address what was to become an ever-more pressing issue.

⁶ ACCM Occasional Paper No. 15, 'An Integrating Theology', by Peter Baelz, 1983.

⁷ Evidence in interview with Principal, 3 July 2001.

The radical Tiller Report⁸ in 1983 recommended a total restructuring of all ordained ministry, with clergy being primarily associated with diocesan teams rather than individual parish cures. The specific recommendations with regard to ordination training assumed that Baelz's recommended integrating method would become the norm for all training institutions, whether Courses or Colleges. But the report did not fit comfortably into the flow of educational development then in progress. What it did do was to highlight the possibilities in the stages in ordination training which, having been tabled, were then to lie dormant for the best part of two decades until being caused to resurface in a slightly different form in the draft Hind Report of 2002.⁹ These consisted of an initial year's training of a preliminary nature, designed to assess an ordinand's particular gifts and aptitudes followed by the bulk of training at Course or College, and completed by a further period of appropriate practical training, called 'induction' training, post-ordination during the individual's first post.¹⁰ The only further contribution to the subject in hand occurred in the General Synod debate on Tiller¹¹ when Mr. T.L. Dye from York diocese made a plea that 'on the job' training of deacons, rather than the pattern of sending away to Theological College, should be taken up much more seriously.

More substantive than Tiller in 1983 for the purposes of the present argument was the report entitled GS Misc175, 'The Financing of Training'.¹² This was the report of a working party which had been deliberately set up in the wake of

⁸ Church of England Individual Title 'A Strategy for the Church's Ministry', by John Tiller, 1983.

⁹ Church of England individual title 'The Structure and Funding of Ordination Training (The interim report of the working party set up by the Archbishops' Council)', February 2002.

¹⁰ Church of England individual title 'A Strategy for the Church's Ministry', by John Tiller, 1983, paragraphs 264 – 268.

¹¹ Church of England reference works, *General Synod Proceedings*, Volume 14, No. 3, pp. 1076-7.

¹² GS Misc 175, 'The Financing of Training', March 1983.

the financial problems of the late 1970's to see if in the slightly more stable climate of the early 1980's there could be any planned reduction in the cost of ordination training. The brief was totally different from that of the Tiller report in that the maintenance of the general status-quo of training the ministry was envisaged. The report was comprehensive in its balancing of finance and educational policy considerations. The relative costs of Colleges and Courses were clearly analysed. Table 6/2 below represents Appendix B of the report.

From Table 6/2 other considerations such as length of training and availability of grants were analysed, and it was shown that the net cost to the Church of two years at College was £5,762 plus all family support, whilst that of three years on a Course was £3,876.¹³ It was found that if one-third of those who would naturally have trained full-time were to be directed to part-time Courses instead, the saving would be 3% of the overall training budget. This was not considered sufficient to warrant such drastic action, especially as a previous report of the Working Party on Alternative Methods of Training (GS 369, para 56) could be cited as recommending that choice of training should not depend primarily on financial considerations.¹⁴ However the more general suggestion of Paragraph 78 can be seen in hindsight to have been widely heeded subsequently:

The prospective savings to be obtained from the substitution of non-residential training are more modest than has often been thought; nevertheless they are clearly important enough to make it desirable that this should be done so far as is possible without sacrifice of standards or the imposition of unacceptable hardship on candidates and their families.

¹³ GSMisc175, 'The Financing of Training', para. 22.

¹⁴ GSMisc175, 'The Financing of Training', para.77.

APPROVED FEES FOR THEOLOGICAL COLLEGES AND COURSES

Colleges	Fees 1982/3
	£
Queen's College, Birmingham	3,168
Trinity College, Bristol	3,195
Ridley Hall, Cambridge	3,189
Westcott House, Cambridge	3,060
Chichester	3,324
Ripon College, Cuddesdon	3,075
Cranmer Hall, Durham	2,941
Lincoln	2,832
Oak Hill	3,015
Mirfield	1,509*
St John's, Nottingham	3,195
St Stephen's House, Oxford	2,940
Wycliffe Hall, Oxford	2,952
Salisbury and Wells	3,152
Edinburgh	1,836*
St Michael's, Llandaff	2,450*
St Deiniol's, Hawarden	1,878*
Courses	
Canterbury	750
Carlisle	1,148
East Anglian	795
East Midlands	360
Oak Hill	903
Southwark	1,017
North East	450
Northern	1,240
Oxford	519
St Albans	1,050
Southern dioceses	975
Exeter	550
Truro	500
West Midlands	1,047
Aston	1,398

* The fees at Mirfield and at the Colleges in Scotland and Wales are lower for specific reasons which do not apply to other Colleges.



The subsequent words are alarming: 'But what this might mean in practice is by no means clear'! Paragraph 81 amplifies this: 'There is need, at the same time, for a thorough and systematic theological and educational evaluation of the present patterns of training, both residential and non-residential, in order to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the present systems of theological education.'

The present study, in chapters 12-14, will demonstrate that nearly twenty years later there was still to be a gulf of understanding between Bishops, supervisory clergy and ex-students concerning the strengths and weaknesses of the Regional Courses. Meantime, later in the same year a report GS583A 'Non-Stipendiary Ministry in the Church of England', by Mark Hodge gave some of the evidence required.¹⁵ It is likely that the problems highlighted were given insufficient weight by the Church in consideration of its overall training standards, given that they were presented in connection with Non-Stipendiary Ministry only, at a time when the vast majority of candidates for Stipendiary Ministry continued to train at the Theological Colleges in spite of the watershed of 1979. 765 of the candidates training for stipendiary ministry in the academic year 1982-83 were at Theological Colleges; 41 were on part-time Courses.¹⁶

The greatest problem highlighted with the Courses by Hodge was the heavy demands on students in time and stress. A number of quotations from personal interviews make very depressing reading, from which the following are selected as typical:¹⁷

The principal used to say that you shouldn't let training interfere with your job, that the job always came before the course. But you felt he never really believed it. One student [a teacher] had to put on a

¹⁵ GS 583A, 'Non-Stipendiary Ministry in the Church of England', by Mark Hodge.

¹⁶ GS583A, 'Non-Stipendiary Ministry', p.50.

¹⁷ GS583A, 'Non-Stipendiary Ministry', para. 80.

Shakespearean play at his school only six months before the end of the course. He told the principal that he would not be able to come to some lectures; there was a great row and he was never seen again.

I worked every night for three years. I used to wait until the family had gone to bed, then work until about two o'clock... I found that I could manage with just five hours sleep.

Our daughter suffered with her education: that was the worst thing. She was between eight and eleven when he was doing his course, which are important years in a child's development. He was working every night, so it was me who had to help her with her homework. But I was no good at it.

The second most significant problem¹⁸ was described as the basic issue of the mode of contact between teachers and lecturers. Three dioceses were quoted as slating Courses for having central rather than local tutor arrangements and therefore lacking flexibility. But for Courses which operated on a local-tutor system, bishops were quoted citing problems with tutor quality, student isolation and the possibility of collapse of candidature should a tutor drop out. Finally, one director of post-ordination training made a further caustic evaluation of the Regional Courses he knew when he said:¹⁹ 'The trouble is that they cannot train properly for work-based ministry. The staff of the training courses have not worked themselves. They do not know what they are talking about.'

One might have thought that the clear call for evaluation of training modes in GS Misc175, 'The Financing of Training', followed by Hodge's evidence above would have prompted some urgent action to address or allay such criticism of the realities of training on the Regional Courses in their then developed form. But at the time this was not the case. Probably the evidence quoted seems more significant in hindsight than it did at the time, when there was still a sense that the Courses formed an exciting new training mode, to be encouraged rather than criticised in

¹⁸ GS583A, 'Non-Stipendiary Ministry', para.82.

¹⁹ GS583A, 'Non-Stipendiary Ministry', para. 88.

general terms. It has to be said also that there were mixed messages about the comparative issues coming out of Church House, Westminster. In ACCM Occasional Paper no. 18, 'A College and a Course in Conversation', published in September 1984, surprising evidence was cited which threatened to turn upside down at least one area of traditional College / Course comparison. The paper was based on the experience of a week's exchange visit between the St. Albans Ministerial Training Scheme and Ripon College, Cuddesdon. Although the Chairman of ACCM wrote in the preface that the paper was 'not as an official statement but to offer information about these types of training and to encourage further discussion', the very act of publishing such a document must have acted as an imprimatur. The point in question was the issue of 'community' and the conclusion was that the Cuddesdon students 'did not seem to know each other very well. Certainly it was evident that M.T.S. [St. Albans] students seemed to know one another better and at a deeper level than did the Ripon College students'. 'Such a basic shaking-up of the preconceptions of residential and non-residential training forced both groups of students to move very quickly beyond any simplistic distinctions between the two types of training.'²⁰

In February 1985, there was a General Synod debate on Non-Stipendiary Ministry which included consideration of Hodge's 1983 report and the training issues contained therein. The Archdeacon of West Ham endorsed the points referred to above on the stress caused by training on Residential Courses. His strongly worded speech was not taken as the accurate evaluation of Course training which it

²⁰ ACCM Occasional Paper no.18., 'A College and Course in Conversation', 1984, pp.8-9.

represented. The following extract appears seminal in the understanding of the latter:²¹

The question mark against courses is not that there is a difference – but I can tell members one thing about part-time training, it is much more costly in marriages than any full-time training was. Some dioceses will not even pay for people to go to college; they say they cannot afford it. It may be that we are doing more harm to a man's marriage by sending him on a course than by trying to get him into full-time training, because the pressure on these courses is enormous. I know this because I have been a DDO for five years and I have been on the council of one of these courses. I am deeply sympathetic to the people. They hold down a full-time job all day in another discipline. They are not accountants doing accountancy in the evenings, or lawyers doing law in the evenings, they are accountants doing accountancy during the day and theology at night.

The pressure may be eased by different kinds of training – it may be – but this pressure has produced some pretty grim results. I ask: if the pressure is like that, is it any way to learn anything? Hodge puts question mark after question mark.

The alleged lack of response to Course criticisms cited above may seem wrong to anyone who was a member of the House of Bishops or on the staff of ACCM at the time, because in October 1983 the former body requested ACCM to undertake research to examine 'the relative merits of the various patterns and styles of training presently used in theological colleges and courses and their suitability for ministry as presently exercised in the Church of England'.²² The result was a three-year research project undertaken by Dr. Mark Hodge and his report, 'Patterns of Ministerial Training', was made available in November 1986. This was an excellent survey document and description of what was then happening in general across the board in ordination training, and it has already been cited in connection with the unusual step of validating all Regional Courses for training of stipendiary candidates in 1979. But overall it answered the criticisms of Courses by asserting

²¹ *General Synod Proceedings*, Volume 10, no.1., pp.388-390.

²² Church of England individual title, 'Patterns of Ministerial Training in the theological colleges and courses', by Mark Hodge, 1985, p.1.

that Colleges had their significant problems too. For instance one Bishop was quoted as writing that, 'wholly residential training tends to divorce a person from the working world and often produces a rather hot-house sort of plant'.²³ One student described the college community as 'superficial' and the teaching methods as 'a joke'.²⁴

Another student referred to a serious moral issue: 'However, the main problem... was one of homosexuality. The atmosphere of the College was very distasteful, and I, together with the other three older students, tended to stay away from it. In any case I had a wife and two children to think about...'.²⁵ On a different tack, a diocesan response noted, 'College shaped spirituality can be a poor preparation for spiritual discipline needed "on the job" (this is a weakness at the very point where colleges would generally consider themselves to be a strength)'.²⁶ One might almost feel that the author deliberately excluded some of the pointed criticisms of Course training previously contained in his report on Non-Stipendiary ministry. The desire to provide balance in assessment is summed up in the conclusion:²⁷ 'There are problems common to both residential and non-residential training, of course, and it may be argued that neither offers suitable preparation for the exercise of professional ministry in today's Church.'

Probably the area in which the report gave the least indication of the relative effectiveness of the Colleges and Courses was in the analysis of understanding

²³ C of E individual titles, 'Patterns', by Hodge, p.58.

²⁴ C of E individual titles, 'Patterns', by Hodge, p.59.

²⁵ C of E individual titles, 'Patterns', by Hodge, p.59. One reference to the problem will be cited in chapter 8 referring to the SEITE Council discussions in March 1999.

²⁶ C of E individual titles, 'Patterns', by Hodge, p.59.

²⁷ C of E individual titles, 'Patterns', by Hodge, p.92.

gained on the traditional basic academic areas of Biblical Studies and Theology. It was clearly stated that 'candidates training non-residentially have substantially less time available for formal academic study than residential candidates and, in consequence of this, they are generally not able to cover the same amount of "ground" on a syllabus. ... it has been reported as a matter of concern by several dioceses'.²⁸ One Bishop was quoted as saying, 'We are not impressed by arguments about relating theology to the world ... one cannot imagine the part-time courses producing many theologians (and we need some!)',²⁹ but otherwise the reader was left to guess at the results of the lower level of academic study. The report was based on research which did not seek to evaluate the effectiveness of training in terms of performance in subsequent ministry, except by asking Bishops, 'could you say what, in very general terms, you see to be the main relative strengths and weaknesses of the present patterns of residential full-time and non-residential part-time training for stipendiary ministry?'³⁰ Perhaps this was deliberate, as the Introduction³¹ cites the absence of agreed definition concerning the aims of training within the Church as creating difficulties in creating programmes of training and in subsequent evaluation. But it should have been possible to find out and report on basics such as how much Biblical knowledge students gained from the various institutions.

Perhaps only the authorities of the Church of England could respond to a demonstrated need for more precise definition of training requirements for its ministers by abrogating all responsibility for doing so! At the point where it might

²⁸ C of E individual titles, 'Patterns', by Hodge, p.68.

²⁹ C of E individual titles, 'Patterns', by Hodge, p.68.

³⁰ C of E individual titles, 'Patterns', by Hodge, p.107.

³¹ C of E individual titles, 'Patterns', by Hodge, p.2.

have been possible to identify training requirements for the ministry and then to recommend adaptations to what both Courses and Colleges were doing in order to meet them, the Church chose instead to ask each individual institution what they saw the requirements as being and then to justify what they were doing in the light of those requirements. This was the crux of the subsequently famous ACCM 22³² published in January 1987. The report was produced by the Working Party on Assessment of the Committee for Theological Education. Not one of the members of the working Party had had any experience as a Vicar or Rector of a parish,³³ yet to this body was given the critical task of guiding policy for the determination of the shape of the Church's ministry for the future. Given the admitted failure of those responsible in the Church to specify adequately the kind of theological education it then expected, and an associated failure to monitor and supervise the content, method and balance of the education as well as assessment, the Working Party considered three broad options. The first of these was to recommend 'tidying up' the then current practice; the second to recommend a return to a centrally defined syllabus; and the third to 'recommend a scheme that would rationalise the present system and would encourage a mature partnership between the colleges or courses and ACCM or other interested bodies in developing appropriate patterns of education and assessment'.³⁴ Any notion of a centralised syllabus was written off because 'It would stifle initiative in colleges and courses and might lead to dull and mechanical training'. By contrast, of the third option it was said, 'It would build on existing good will and achievements. It would encourage initiative and educational

³² ACCM Occasional Paper no.22, 'Education for the Church's Ministry. The Report of the Working Party on Assessment', January 1987.

³³ That is, which can be traced through entries in C of E reference works, *Crockfords Clerical Directory*.

³⁴ ACCM22, pp.22-23.

professionalism (in the best sense) among theological educators. It would encourage the sort of co-operation and self-assessment that is generally being developed in discussions about ministry'.³⁵

The heart of ACCM 22 consisted of three questions which henceforth would have to be addressed by each training institution as the basis of their validation by ACCM and their successors:³⁶

1. What ordained ministry does the Church of England require?
2. What is the shape of the educational programme best suited for equipping people to exercise this ministry?
3. What are the appropriate means of assessing suitability for ordination to exercise this ministry?

It was clearly understood that putting these questions to individual institutions represented a devolution of responsibility to them and this was seen in the context of an accountability to the Church to be exercised through the supervisory and regulating rôle of ACCM.³⁷

Although ACCM supervision was to be maintained, the general approach of ACCM22 was to encourage initiative and diversity rather than to prescribe uniformity. Although this was deliberately done to avoid any sense of a stifling approach on the part of central Church authorities, the subsequent existence of as many different statements of needs, curricula and standards as there were institutions was to make it very difficult to address differences between what was on offer between them. No longer could anything be unsatisfactory with regard to an external standard, but only unsatisfactory with respect to the institution's own intentions. Courses and Colleges were offered the opportunity to define their own

³⁵ ACCM22, pp.22-23.

³⁶ ACCM22, pp.23-24.

³⁷ ACCM22, p.25.

intentions, but at the price of considerable continuing effort in producing and updating extensive validation documentation.

The Working Party were wrong in their general abrogation of responsibility for defining expectations and requirements, as subsequent comments later in this chapter will show. What might have helped their desire for the initiatives of individual institutions to inform the whole Church, but which was not considered, was the differentiation between Courses and Colleges in the catchment of students. Colleges always have had differences in approach to training, usually doctrinal and defined in their Trust Deeds, which has made for market variety in the context of each student, or guiding diocesan authority, being able to choose from the various options from time to time available. But most Course students have no choice as to where they train by virtue of where they live. The experience of society in general is that most monopoly institutions require more regulation, not less. It can be argued that for Colleges the freedom given by ACCM 22 endorsed the concept of freedom of approach in the context of student choice, whereas for Courses the same freedom of approach instead institutionalised the provision of differing standards as policy.

Although ACCM 22 was the document which was to dominate the consciousness of Courses and Colleges alike for more than a decade, the Courses were not left without distinctive attention but what was to follow next had more to do with administrative issues than with academic content or standards. ACCM Occasional Paper no.30, published in February 1989 as 'Ordination Training on Courses' was the Report of the Working Party on the Structure and Finance of Theological Courses which was set up in the wake of Hodge's 'Patterns of Ministerial Training'. This new paper undoubtedly identified matters in connection with the Courses requiring urgent attention. Their then current pattern was

described as 'ad-hoc... derived from, and in many cases still closely tied to, local roots'. In this context the Working Party saw their recommendations as a move 'towards a more formally structured system aiming to achieve a more even coverage across England'.³⁸ Evidence of the then 'ad-hoc' nature of the Courses is provided by the Report's comment, 'During our enquiries, we have been surprised not only by the diversity of educational models used by Courses, but also by the wide variation in their powers, roles and levels of activity of the Governing Bodies.'³⁹ Detailed information was collected from Course Principals on how their courses were operating in an overall pattern. No inquiries were made about individual academic subject areas but nevertheless quite penetrating issues, such as hours of student / tutor face-to-face contact time, were investigated.⁴⁰ The detailed information supplied by the Courses was not made public, but the list of some 54 recommendations comprising Chapter XI of the Report⁴¹ indicates by deduction some of the important things which were not then universal practice!

Of the issues which were addressed in detail by ACCM 30, certain were old concerns applied to the new institutions. For instance paragraph 57 and recommendation 9 concerned problems with the viability of the smallest Courses and declared 'out of court' any Course with less than 8 ordination candidates in any given year. The high influence of the Principal in a small institution was also addressed, although in this case the recommendation was that that person should be more, not less applied to the respective Course, in each case, in a teaching rôle. The

³⁸ ACCM Occasional Paper no. 30, 'Ordination Training on Courses. The Report of the Working Party on the structure and finance of theological courses', 1989, para.89.

³⁹ ACCM30, para.90.

⁴⁰ ACCM30, Appendix A.

⁴¹ The 54 recommendations of ACCM 30 are listed in the Appendix.

conclusion that no Course should have less than 1 ½ members of core staff, the '1' of whom should be a full time teaching Principal, serves to reinforce the tiny scale of operation of some of the Courses under consideration. (paragraphs 62 + 63 and recommendations 11 + 12). The crucial issue of ensuring adequate quality of other teaching staff was also addressed (paragraph 72 and recommendation 20).

There were other concerns with the stabilisation and regularisation of Course finances and structures, in order to increase confidence in future viability and implement a common system of management. In order to alleviate uncertainty in funding due to the unpredictability in numbers of candidates, a system broken down into fixed and variable costs was recommended (no. 38). As for management issues, a standard structure was recommended giving the right to Governing Bodies to appoint Principals and removing the right of Diocesan Bishops to be chairmen. Henceforward it was intended that the Regional Courses should be institutions genuinely independent of their sponsoring dioceses, with an autonomous existence outside the direct authority of any single diocesan Bishop (recommendations 15, 29 and 30). Although reasons were given for genuine possible conflicts of interest between Bishop and ordinand, it can be argued that this distancing of local training from local Bishops would be one factor in the development in certain dioceses of Local Non-Stipendiary Ministry in the years to come, offering a greater opportunity for each Bishop to exercise more direct control over the training of some of his clergy. In terms of the overall shape of the pattern of Regional Courses, however, perhaps those recommendations which were to cause most activity and stress within the Courses were numbers 25 and 26, which together condemned every Course serving only one diocese and demanded restructuring so that each new Course could serve a number of dioceses. The St. Albans Course was dealt a double blow, in that

recommendation 11 stipulated that prospective ordination candidates should not join a Course before selection. All minimum requirements proposed by the report were accepted by the House of Bishops in June 1989 as future conditions for the recognition of the Courses.⁴²

For 1990, the ACCM Report indicated that the House of Bishops' Steering Group for Theological Courses, under the Bishop of Lincoln, was in the process of consulting with all the Courses to discuss how all the new ACCM 30 structural requirements could be met.⁴³ Meanwhile ACCM 38, 'Residence – an education', published in the same year, restored some of the emphasis on residence in ordination training which might have been seen as partly demolished by ACCM 18 (q.v.) in 1984. This is indicated in the preface in which it was stated, 'The Council accepts the view of the Working Party that in residence we have a powerful instrument for the training of the Church's ministers.'⁴⁴ But the report did not want to see the Regional Courses continue with the label of 'non-residential', rather stressing the assertion that residence had a crucial part to play in the delivery of training for both Colleges and Courses.⁴⁵ Although this may sound open and positive, another paragraph was implicitly damning of Course-style training in stating, 'In the residential periods Courses can provide their students with space, a defined time, more or less controlled by the Course and not by work or family. It is in this residential space that concentrated learning can take place.'⁴⁶ The implication that all attendance time at College can potentially provide concentrated learning, but

⁴² GS 910, 'ACCM Annual Report for 1989', para.23.

⁴³ GS 958, 'ACCM Annual Report 1990', para. 39.

⁴⁴ ACCM Occasional Paper no.38, 'Residence – an Education', 1990, p.1.

⁴⁵ ACCM38, p.2.

⁴⁶ ACCM38, pp.24-25.

only the residential periods on a Course, was, however, not taken up further as perhaps could be expected in a Church now committed to Regional Courses as equivalent trainers with respect to the Colleges. Another issue raised in the same year at General Synod also seems to be a continuing problem a decade later. The Archdeacon of Lewisham informed synod that 'although Courses are meant to reflect the breadth of the Church of England I have heard increasingly from students that on their courses they are not receiving a fair balance of either teaching or book lists or worship or ethos'.⁴⁷

In 1991, the ABM⁴⁸ Annual Report⁴⁹ recorded that all Colleges and Courses had now submitted validation documentation to meet the requirements of ACCM 22. Maybe the Church was attempting to show that the latter report did not abrogate responsibility for definition of the ministry it required when in 1990 an ACCM Working Party, led by Professor Rowan Williams, conducted a theological analysis of the bulk of responses which had by then been received. The resulting findings were published as ABM Ministry Paper No.1, 'Ordination and the Church's Ministry',⁵⁰ and offered a critique of the responses to the first question of ACCM 22 ('What ordained ministry does the Church of England require?') against a theological understanding of Missiology as participating in the Trinity and a theological understanding of Ecclesiology concerned primarily with Church order. But once again a weakness of the six-member working party was that none of them had had any experience of being Vicar or Rector of a Parish. It could be strongly

⁴⁷ C of E reference works, *General Synod Proceedings*, Volume 21, No.2, p.803.

⁴⁸ 'Advisory Board of Ministry', replacing ACCM.

⁴⁹ GS 1002, 'ABM Annual Report 1991', para. 20.

⁵⁰ ABM Ministry Paper No.1, 'Ordination and the Church's Ministry: An Interim Evaluation of College and Course Responses to ACCM Paper No.22', 1991.

argued that anyone arbitrating concerning the ministry the Church requires should have the experience not only of theology but also of praxis.

The report ABM Ministry Paper No.3, 'Integration and Assessment',⁵¹ published in 1992, represented the Church's attempt to consider responses from the Colleges and Courses to the two other validation questions posed by ACCM 22, concerning the shape of their educational programmes and means of assessment of ordinands. The document was generally descriptive of reported practice, reassuring about differences in approach and understanding about special factors faced, for instance by the Courses. Most sections of it contain gentle suggestions for consideration, and now as an historical document it paints an informative picture of the general approach the institutions were taking to the matters in hand. Nowhere does it ask any detail questions about the actual content of the curriculum. Nowhere does it offer any observations about, for instance, the amount of Biblical Studies being undertaken. Perhaps this was seen as being too large a task or with too many variables to make it manageable. But surely someone, somewhere, should have had the public brief to be able to say things like, 'Attempting to cover the whole of the Old Testament in ten one-evening sessions is not good enough.'⁵² Similarly someone should have been looking at assessment issues like, 'How much is likely to be retained by tired Course students from an evening lecture / seminar when they know there will be no follow-up written work to test their understanding?'⁵³

⁵¹ ABM Ministry Paper no.3, 'Integration and Assessment: An Interim Evaluation of College and Course Responses to ACCM Paper No.22', 1992.

⁵² Example taken from an informal comment made by a Course staff member, 3 Jan 2001.

⁵³ Example derived from observed classes and informal student comment.

In the 1992 ABM Report⁵⁴ the official verdict as to progress in theological education was warmly encouraging:

It looks as though there have been a number of significant shifts, though much, of course, remains to be done. First there is more emphasis on God's mission in the world, less on maintenance and pastoral care. Communication has improved and there is more collaboration in the context of the corporate ministry of the whole Church. The theological basis from which people are working is clearer and more attention is paid to the purpose and function of the ordained ministry. Training is more coordinated and better able to identify how both student and staff development may be achieved. Last, but very important, is the increased recognition that theological education is a life-long process. A system aimed to promote the "profiling" of the development of ordinands through initial, post-ordination and continuing ministerial education is being encouraged.

No one reading this report would have had grounds for thinking that anything but what was eminently satisfactory was happening to the education of the Church's future ministers. However, in the Church at large there was little sign that the assertion that training was now more mission-focussed was bearing any fruit in practice in the parishes. Hindsight shows that the 1990's (which was also the Decade of Evangelism) were characterised by a continuing trend of contraction of the membership of the Church of England. Of course, many will argue the irrelevance of this, given that evangelism is different from mission. But it is a poor participation in the work of God which does not commend some form of response which can be identified in people's lives.

Part of the reason for less progress than might have been desirable in the curricula of the Courses during the early 1990's was the attention being given to the proposed reorganisation following the publication of ACCM 30. Albeit the changes sponsored involved only certain of the regions, but for those affected the activity of responding to proposals and formulating counter-proposals seem to have absorbed a

⁵⁴ GS 1054, 'ABM Annual Report 1992', p.4.

large amount of effort. The Lincoln Report⁵⁵ of 1992 contained the analysis and recommendations of the Steering Group for Theological Courses, set up by the House of Bishops in October 1989 in order to advise on the implementation of the ACCM 30 recommendations. The first conclusion about regional coverage was that each of the regions needed to be covered by a single Course, with single Governing Body and single staff team, and not by some sort of collaborative arrangements between then existing Courses.⁵⁶ Fuller details of the process at regional level will be contained in the following chapter. For the time being however, the general shape of the changes suggested should be noted.⁵⁷

In the first instance it was proposed to replace SOC and CSM with a single, new, SEITE (South-East Institute for Theological Education) and the report indicated that a Shadow Council for this had now been set up. SDMTS was to remain broadly the same, but it was expected it would in the future be used less by ordinands from Bristol and Bath and Wells dioceses. In the South West, it was proposed that there should be a gradual unification between the Gloucester School for Ministry, which was changing its name to the West of England Ministerial Training Course (WEMTC) and SWMTC. This was never to happen due to the geographical area concerned being hopelessly large. A single Course was mooted to replace the Oxford, St. Albans and Oak Hill Courses, it being pronounced as 'unworkable' to allow Oak Hill, with its distinctive theological stance, to continue under the new regime. It was also noted that regional representatives thought the area too large and were working on an amalgamation of OMC and SADMTS with a

⁵⁵ GS (Misc) 401, 'Theological Training, a Way Ahead. A Report to the House of Bishops of the Church of England on Theological Colleges and Courses' (the Lincoln Report), 1992.

⁵⁶ GSMisc 401, the Lincoln Report, para.23.

⁵⁷ The following comments are all based on information from GSMisc 401, the Lincoln Report, paras. 30-71.

second based on OHMTC and the two joined together by a Colloquium arrangement. Clear efforts to excise all distinct Evangelicalism as an ethos from within the Regional Course network are obvious from the text.

In the midlands, closer co-operation between EMMTC and WMMTC was mooted via a joint Board of Studies, but nothing closer proposed, whilst for EAMTC there was the recommendation of a closer relationship with the Cambridge Federation of Theological Colleges. NOC, based in Manchester, was also looked on as a stable institution, and proposals for it were limited to certain features in connection with its governing body. In Cumbria and the North-East, the establishment of a single Course to cover the region was being recommended, and disappointment expressed that negotiations had not proceeded further. It was obvious that the Steering Group were strongly committed to this course of action, and the seeming inertia from the region was being lamented. As will be referred to in the following chapter, the regional personnel meanwhile were feeling hard pressed to understand why the Group seemed not to acknowledge the existence of the somewhat immovable Pennine mountain range dividing the geographical area clearly in two in logistics and communications. One can almost sense the disharmony in this and other regions when one reads, 'whilst the Group is content with the progress being made in some Regions, it has serious reservations about the pace of development and level of commitment to it in others'.⁵⁸

Problems associated with the publication of the Lincoln Report were felt in General Synod in the same year. Proposals concerning College closures rather than Course re-organisation perhaps took centre-stage, but the latter nevertheless took plenty of criticism. Perhaps the most damning came from an Oxford academic who

⁵⁸ GSMisc 401, the Lincoln Report, para.72.

was General Synod representative on the West Midlands Course and who commented thus on the lack of communication between the Steering Group and the various Regional representatives: 'I am sad that there was a hidden agenda and that the local consultations were not taken seriously enough. What a waste of time it was for so many people.'⁵⁹ Shortly afterwards there was a strongly worded criticism of the Bishop of Lincoln by the Bishop of Carlisle who said that the former did not understand mountains: 'I am not talking about... Lincolnshire ditches.'⁶⁰

In the Church, the main follow-up to the Lincoln Report was the Hereford Report⁶¹ of 1993. This concentrated virtually entirely on the residential Colleges and proposed closures, the Courses being only mentioned in passing as something to which 'The Church of England is still adjusting'.⁶² The Bishop of Hereford himself, in the July 1993 General Synod warned of the danger of widening the quality gap between Colleges and Courses if huge geographical areas for the latter were to be insisted upon.⁶³ The traditional strength of the opportunity to reflect theologically was also cited, but the overall impression is arguably that of Courses being the second line of the Church's theological training, rather than equal partners with the Colleges.

In the aftermath of the Lincoln and Hereford Reports, whilst College closures took place, there seems to have been more compromise over the Regional

⁵⁹ C of E reference works, *General Synod Proceedings*, Vol.23, No.3, p.793.

⁶⁰ C of E reference works, *General Synod Proceedings*, Vol. 23, No.3, pp. 812-3.

⁶¹ C of E individual title, 'Theological Colleges – The Next Steps, Report of the Assessment Group on Theological Colleges' (the Hereford Report), 1993.

⁶² 'Theological Colleges – The Next Steps', (the Hereford Report), para. 2.28.

⁶³ *General Synod Proceedings*, vol.24, No.2, p.400.

Course proposals. The ABM Report for 1994⁶⁴ simply notes the two Courses for Oxford / St. Albans and North Thames (whereas a single unit had initially been pressed) and also capitulation on the other unwelcome proposed amalgamations with the exception of SEITE. It was stated that geographical factors for the South-West and extreme North of England were now recognised and that in the Midlands, proposals for clustering of theological institutions were to take precedence. In hindsight it is at least arguable that the high level of effort involved in debating and in most cases challenging the ACCM 30 / Lincoln proposals would have been better employed in improving more specifically curricular concerns. From a factual point of view, it can be recorded that 1994 saw the development of the Courses into the pattern which has subsequently remained stable.

To illustrate an inescapable state of flux on the part of theological education and higher education in general, 1995 saw the publication of ABM Ministry Paper No.10, 'Current Proposals for Mixed-Mode Training in the Church of England'. This was, however, very much a description of pilot schemes rather than proposals to alter the general shape of established Colleges and Courses. Generally post-1994, there appeared to be an interval of enjoyment of the newly-established status quo, with the winds of change briefly stilled.

The appointment of a new Chief Secretary of A.B.M.⁶⁵ in 1996 seems chronologically to have marked the beginning of the most recent round of deliberations over the Church of England's theological education for its ordinands. GS Misc 507, 'Issues in Theological Education and Training',⁶⁶ published in 1997,

⁶⁴ GS 1139, ABM Annual Report, 1994, paras. 4.4-4.5.

⁶⁵ The Venerable Gordon Kuhrt, formerly Archdeacon of Lewisham.

⁶⁶ GSMisc 507, 'Issues in Theological Education and Training' (ABM Ministry Paper no.15), by The Ven. G. Kuhrt, 1997.

was partly a review of developments within the Church's provision for ordination training in the then recent years. However, in addition thirteen separate issues were addressed as being outstanding and requiring further attention. These were summarised into seven key issues⁶⁷ which related to the whole spectrum of institutions including Colleges, Regional Courses and the other Local Schemes now growing in number and preparing candidates for the Local Non-Stipendiary Ministry (but outside the scope of this thesis). Of these, two are particularly related to the subject-matter in hand:-

2. The questions about **educational standards** and **formational adequacy** in some institutions – especially Regional Courses and Schemes where either numbers are small and/ or staffing is inadequate.
3. The issue of the desirability of **agreed standards** or competences at key points in training – and the associated idea of a **core curriculum** in initial training. How do these ideas relate to local initiative and a proper diversity?

Of these two major concerns, the first clearly relates to the questions of evaluation which have been raised for the Courses throughout the present study. The concern for standards in this area rather than in relation to the Theological Colleges endorses the notion of comparison which is being used. ABM's Chief Secretary was clearly not addressing in this area the mere difference of approach between institutions, but the issue of some being adequate and others inadequate. Four years after the publication of the Hereford Report, it seems that the Church had finally moved from a position of adjusting to the existence of Regional Courses to one of critical evaluation of what had been institutionalised. The issue of certain institutions having a very small core staff was particularly cited.⁶⁸ As for the core curriculum idea, this was no doubt in response to the previously cited developments associated

⁶⁷ GSMisc 507, p.35.

⁶⁸ GSMisc 507, p.35.

with ACCM 22. However, the areas cited as being of concern were homiletics/ preaching/ communications; mission/ evangelism; ecclesiology (and its integration with mission/ evangelism); issues of discrimination (racism, sexism, disability etc.).⁶⁹ The even more fundamental areas of biblical studies and general academic theology, which one would usually expect to be specified as source material for derived subject matter, were not at this stage mentioned as being of concern.

Perhaps 'Issues in Theological Education and Training', in mentioning the lack of a core curriculum, was voicing a more general concern that with ACCM 22 the Church should not have abrogated responsibility for specifying to the independent training institutions what it expected in the training of its ordinands in return for the fees it was paying. At any rate, ABM Ministry Paper no. 17, 'Beginning Public Ministry', which was published the following year, thought fit to specify no less than seventeen 'Expectations to be met during Initial Training' as a baseline for describing appropriate Continuing Ministerial Education to be undertaken thereafter. The relevant list encapsulates the problem of different items having vastly different implications in terms of the time and expertise necessary to achieve them, but at least the Church was stating that, among other things, it expected 'firm and thorough grounding' in theology and the scriptures.

The final major document to be considered in this section was published in 1999 following approval by the House of Bishops in June of that year. 'Mission and Ministry: The Churches' Validation Framework for Theological Education', a report published by the Ministry Division of the Archbishops' Council, was designed to update and take the place of ACCM 22 in specifying validation procedures. Rather than admit that the Church had been wrong in failing to specify adequately what training it expected its ordinands to undergo since the advent of

⁶⁹ GSMisc 507, p.35.

ACCM 22, a background picture was painted of the latter as a revolutionary report, replacing a situation of chaos which had pertained to the evaluation of courses by theoretical equivalences to a fast-disappearing General Ministerial Education, whilst respecting the integrity of teaching staff, but requiring them to be specific about the educational aims and concepts of ministry informing their curricula.⁷⁰ In curiously inflammatory language, problems which had been associated with the implementation of ACCM 22 were ascribed to 'bolshevik' elements and bureaucracy! Rather than admit a mistake, the background to the production of 'Mission and Ministry' was described thus:

To counterbalance any centrifugal tendencies in the [ACCM 22 validation] process, various working parties of ACCM, ABM and now the Ministry Division have been producing papers promoting convergence. At the same time, the legitimate concern behind various calls for greater standardisation around a core curriculum have been met creatively by focussing on the ideas, developed in this Report, of learning outcomes and agreed expectations, and by smoothing the transition between initial training and the beginning of public ministry.⁷¹

When one unpacks what the report means by the above, it becomes obvious that its authors were still avoiding at all costs the suggestion that the demand for a core curriculum should be expressed in terms such as 'a detailed understanding of one of the Synoptic Gospels and of the Gospel of John', by steering the idea of 'agreed expectations' in the direction of a 'process of growth and development' in certain curriculum areas for the candidates. In this context, the requirement published in ABM Ministry Paper no.17 'Beginning Public Ministry' that ordination candidates should be expected 'to have gained... firm and thorough grounding in theological, biblical and historical studies' was reinterpreted as an

⁷⁰ C of E individual title, 'Mission and Ministry: The Churches' Validation Framework for Theological Education', 1999, p.iii.

⁷¹ 'Mission and Ministry', p.iii.

expectation that they should 'be involved in a process of growth and development in... knowledge of Scripture and Christian tradition and the descriptive, analytic and critical skills necessary to understand and communicate the faith; theological, biblical and historical studies in the context of the life of faith.'⁷² This approach is unsatisfactory. It seeks to root a definition of the educational process as one undergone in terms of the experience of the student. None of the ex-students being approached for their contribution to chapter 14 following would deny having been involved in a process of growth and development, but a great many, as it will be seen, are critical of the adequacy of their teaching in Biblical Studies and Theology compared with the requirements of their subsequent ministries. The only contribution of 'Mission and Ministry' to specific curriculum content was the dropping of the requirement for candidates under the age of thirty to study New Testament Greek, said to be a 'relic of the GME training philosophy'.⁷³ Thus, while it could be said that the document represented an effort by the Church to re-specify certain requirements for ordination training, it could equally be argued that with 'Mission and Ministry' the last vestige of real curriculum specification disappeared.

'Mission and Ministry' remains at the time of writing the central policy document for the Church's validation of institutions providing theological training before ordination. The report can be seen either as contributing to convergence in the specification of training requirements, or of avoiding the issue, depending on one's point of view. Christianity does not have the emphasis of a religion such as Jainism, which concentrates on growth of the individual in asceticism. Rather Church membership is confessional, representing acceptance of the Gospel of God

⁷² 'Mission and Ministry', p.41.

⁷³ 'Mission and Ministry', p.45.

as uniquely revealed through His Son Jesus Christ. This being so, one of the major issues facing the Church of England's Ministry Division at the beginning of the twenty-first century, and through them the whole Church, is why, with church membership based on confessional acceptance of the claims of God, there appears to be a continuing reluctance on the part of the Church to specify that its ministers should know what those claims actually are!

Chapter 7: Development of Individual Courses, 1979-2000 – The North and South-West

This chapter and the following three give an outline of the history of each of the Regional Courses in turn throughout that period during which they have been validated for the training of candidates for both Non-Stipendiary and Stipendiary ministry. These histories illustrate the implementation of the policy decisions, reports and directives from ‘the centre’, just described, on the basis of the initial development of Courses up to 1979, which was recounted in Chapter 2. Direct comparisons between the Courses as to actions in given common circumstances are not always possible due to differing archival preservation. What can be done, however, is to show the main emphases, problems and priorities of each Course in turn using those records which have been accessible. From these main priorities and concerns can be inferred something of the differing characteristics of the individual institutions.

I Carlisle Diocesan Training Institute. (CDTI).

Carlisle and Blackburn Diocesan Training Institute. (CBDTI).

It was the recognition of the Carlisle Diocesan Training Institute by ACCM in 1980, which completed the coverage of the Regional Theological Courses across the whole of England. It was, perhaps, the vast rural areas of the North-West with their sparse population which made this region the least easy to serve institutionally. The story of CDTI/ CBDTI is one of a small institution developing a variety of

training roles, but always serving a small and very widely spread-out student body. From its inception to the present day, the continuing challenge has been to provide a training commensurate with that available in more gathered urban settings whilst coping with large geographical distances, the impossibility of regular gathered teaching sessions, logistical problems, especially in winter, and numbers of ordinands so small that on more than one occasion it has been cited as too small to be an efficient educational institution. It is worth setting forth at the outset, therefore, one issue which has not always been seen in every quarter as obvious. The ethos of the Regional Courses in their inception and development as a network was that an ordinands should be able to train for ministry without uprooting from home, from 1979, whether a candidate for Non-Stipendiary or Stipendiary ministry. If, as is the case in the North-West, special, even extreme, conditions exist, it was necessary to develop a Course to suit the needs of the region, rather than try to bend the region to suit an academic definition of what some think should constitute a Course!

In point of fact, CDTI did not start *ex nihilo* in 1980 but was inaugurated on Sunday 22 October 1978 at St. John's Church, Windermere.¹ A theological consultant had been appointed by ACCM, from the Department of Religious Studies at Lancaster University² and it was reported that residential sessions were being held at Quernmore Priory which was relatively near to the university. Nine students were enrolled by the middle of the second term out of thirteen starters.³ Unusually, the first academic session started in January 1979. Of those nine, two

¹ Reported at Committee Meeting of 7.6.79, Business Meetings file, CBDTI archives.

² Dr. David Catchpole.

³ Business Meetings file, CBDTI archives.

were intending for Stipendiary ministry and the rest Non-Stipendiary. What is amazing, from a post-2000 perspective, is that none of the students had been recommended for training by ACCM, and even by the middle of the second term the Diocese had no plans for these individuals, or policy for others, yet determined. Other points of note are that the enterprise had as its Director the Archdeacon of Westmoreland and Furness who was in addition an Incumbent in his own right! From the beginning the teaching pattern was conceived as consisting of a certain number of residential weekends with each candidate meeting weekly with a local tutor.

A report on the first year's work of CDTI yields a synopsis of the curriculum content as then extant. Subject areas covered were Christian Doctrine, Old Testament, New Testament, Worship, The Eucharist, Ethics and 'More Practical Matters'. Wording describing the contents of each of this is more 'homespun' than one would expect from such a similar document today, for instance under Old Testament: 'A look at what is in the Old Testament and why Christians need to bother with it at all'. At the same time the contrast between this phraseology and that describing work on the Eucharist e.g.: 'What makes a good anaphora?' speaks clearly of the basic theological stance. If it is a truism that the quality of a dispersed Regional Course stands or falls on the quality of its Local Tutors, the list of the latter might also indicate falling rather than standing. Of the eight declared, five held only Bachelor's degrees and credentials such as 'In charge of R.E. at a Comprehensive School', perhaps indicate somewhat of a gulf between teaching staff at CDTI and those of the more traditional establishments. CDTI was informed in mid-1980 by ACCM⁴ that it had been granted provisional recognition

⁴ Letter of 2 June 1980, Business Meetings file, CBDTI archives.

for five years, but there was a proviso, made by the Committee for Theological Education (of ACCM) that, 'every reasonable effort should be made by the Carlisle diocese to appoint someone for whom the Institute would be expected to be a very substantial part of his work. They hoped that such a person would have as one of his primary responsibilities constant oversight of the syllabus....'. Whilst glad to endorse what was being achieved, ACCM was also obviously aware of the early opportunities for improvement!

The first batch of students from CDTI were ordained deacons in March 1982, and in the same year it was reported that women could now be admitted to train as layworkers and deaconesses and that the first ecumenical student, from the United Reformed Church, had been enrolled.⁵ In 1984 a new Director was appointed, marking the separation of the post from Archdeacon's responsibilities, and this time in conjunction with cathedral and other diocesan training responsibilities. No particular issues surface in the Business Meeting file covering this period and gradual development of the Institute in all its aspects may be assumed. There was one change of policy, in 1985, when it was decided that candidates were generally only to be admitted for training once recommended by ACCM. By 1988, however, there is an indication in correspondence with ACCM that central concerns over educational principles were in conflict with the practical work of serving the Church's needs for training of Non-Stipendiary Ministers in an area of widely scattered population. The publication of ACCM 30 in 1989⁶ seems to have prompted discussions with Lancaster University about possible collaboration on the availability of a university Diploma, as one possible avenue for pooling

⁵ Undated Report, Business Meetings file, CDBTI archives.

⁶ See Chapter 6.

regional resources.⁷ There was also a consciousness of being targeted as one of the Courses expected to amalgamate with others as part of that Report's proposals.⁸ ACCM 30 was minuted as being, 'at present too much London dictated without enough sensitivity and understanding of what is happening on the ground'.⁹ At the same time, a new syllabus was being drafted in response to ACCM 22, and in a fairly rare reference of the Business Meeting to curriculum details, it was reported that, 'Sadly they were requiring a more traditional approach to Old Testament study'.¹⁰

Although 'London' stood accused of not understanding the 'on-the-ground' situation in the North-West, their then concern is understandable. Even the CDTI Director's Report in June 1990¹¹ describes concern at student numbers. It seems that the total across three years was to fall from 20 to 15 the following autumn, even the latter figure being admitted as possibly over-optimistic. It is clear from correspondence at the time that 'London', in the shape of the ACCM Steering Group for Theological Courses, was not considering whether CDTI should be amalgamated, but how. A joint response in January 1991¹² from CDTI together with NOC and NEOC argued that the amalgamation of the Courses to form one Northern Institute would be a massive exercise covering the whole of the Northern Province, with the exception of Southwell diocese. The scale of the operation involved was

⁷ Minutes of 30 September, 1989, Business Meetings file, CBDTI archives.

⁸ Minutes of 10 June, 1989, Business Meetings file, CBDTI archives.

⁹ Minutes of 20 January, 1990, Business Meetings file, CBDTI archives.

¹⁰ Minutes of 20 January, 1990, Business Meetings file, CBDTI archives.

¹¹ CDTI Council file, CBDTI archives.

¹² 'A response to "Two possible approaches for consideration by the Northern Courses"', January 1991, CDTI Council file, CBDTI archives.

deemed to be too great, particularly when the need to develop relationships with other Theological Institutions in Durham and Manchester was concerned. At the same time the ability to cater for distinctive areas within the Province would, it was thought, be prejudiced, without a great deal of effort to the contrary. A counter-response from ACCM was unyielding!¹³

The whole process of discussion and debate regarding the future of CDTI seems to have become quite acrimonious. ACCM stated clearly in correspondence that it was the Northern Courses themselves who had suggested the formation of a Northern Institute for training. But in a document circulated in December 1990¹⁴, the Carlisle Course responded:

Why are they [i.e. these proposals] being made? In response to ACCM 30? Certainly not on the initiative of the North as suggested in the document, perhaps in response and by certain individuals. To reduce costs? Certainly not as by any reckoning the new suggestions will cost more overall, mainly because of increased travel and another layer of administration. To give more security and stability in terms of numbers? Perhaps. But could not this be achieved by way of a loose federation based on the analogy of a group ministry as over against a team ministry? To achieve educational goals? Very unlikely for the reasons stated above (so much a matter of 'swings and roundabouts'). To achieve a 'tidy' distribution of courses? A wholly questionable and unworthy reason in the context of the church's call to ministry and mission.

The same document asserted that such proposals, if implemented, would cause severe losses to CDTI in many areas, namely regional identity, formation, direction, fellowship, liturgical training, vocations, tutors, local control near to the ground, and integration with Diocesan post-ordination training and CME.

Under threat of closure in its then present form, CDTI attracted a wave of local support. A sheaf of Deanery Synod motions supporting the retention of the

¹³ ACCM letter dated 20 February 1991, CDTI Council file, CBDTI archives.

¹⁴ 'Response to the suggestion of "A Northern Institute"', CDTI Future file, CBDTI archives.

Institute exists on file.¹⁵ Typical is that passed by the Appleby Deanery on 16 November 1992, worded as follows:

That this Deanery is mindful of the excellent work done by the Carlisle Diocesan Training Institute (CDTI) over the past years in training ordinands and readers in training to serve this Diocese.

That this Deanery believes that many of these ordinands and teachers in training would not have been able to train had it not been for the CDTI because of the difficulties of travel in this area.

That this Deanery deplores any scheme which would lessen the effectiveness of the CDTI as a local Training Institute. This effectiveness depends on the CDTI's continued ability to deliver training in this wide spread area with its difficult communications and it must be preserved.

There was at this time activity on the part of CDTI to explore possible relationships with St. Martin's, Lancaster, Charlotte Mason at Ambleside (part of Lancaster University) and St. John's College at Durham, whilst resisting pressures to discuss amalgamation with NEOC.¹⁶

In parallel with the above initiatives in 1992 a 'Steering Group for Theological Courses – North' was set up, to help co-ordinate the discussions between CDTI, NEOC and ACCM, with a brief to consider 'how to deliver ministerial training, accessible to all, north of the Blackpool-Bridlington line'.¹⁷ Various issues were discussed, including features of both Courses worth preserving and features needing more attention, possible co-operation with regard to curriculum design and staff training, and the problems already faced by the Courses individually due to over-large geographical areas.¹⁸ A joint curriculum design group

¹⁵ CDTI Future file, CBDTI archives.

¹⁶ Correspondence in CDTI Future file, CBDTI archives.

¹⁷ Minutes of Steering Group, 29 January 1992, CDTI Future file, CBDTI archives.

¹⁸ Minutes of Steering Group, March 1992, CDTI Future file, CBDTI archives.

was proposed and a timetable for action in order to meet an agreed co-ordinated joint ACCM 22 submission of 1994.¹⁹

The next documentation to emerge from the whole process of consideration of re-organisation was a series of formal responses at the end of 1992 from the CDTI Council, CDTI tutors and CDTI students.²⁰ These were published in answer to the new Lincoln Report, dated October 1992, which sought to suggest the right ways of implementing ACCM 30. The Lincoln Report was overtly critical of both CDTI and NEOC in their failure to make progress towards ACCM objectives. The CDTI Council took the bit between its teeth and back pedalled on the previous suggestions of a joint Board of Studies with NEOC. It refused to agree on the principle of One Regional Course to cover Cumbria and the North East on the grounds of taking decision-making away from CDTI's catchment area with its special demographic and geographic characteristics. Instead it proposed the development of a close relationship with St. Martin's College, Lancaster, and through them the validation of its courses through Lancaster University. The tutors' response emphasised the strength of tutors being drawn from the parish clergy, as against being teachers with more 'narrow' experience. Whilst the students' response paid tribute to the quality of the Institute's overall operation and pointed out that the geographical dispersal of students and its attendant problems would not be changed on the ground by altering the configuration of the organisation which served them.

A meeting of the House of Bishops on January 1993 extended timescales for re-organisation and consequent uncertainty, but whilst agreeing to the general thrust of The Lincoln Report, also took note of the need for flexibility to meet local

¹⁹ Minutes of Steering Group, July 1992, CDTI Future file, CDBTI archives.

²⁰ Available in Principal's Correspondence file, CDBTI archives.

circumstances.²¹ CDTI expressed its gratitude to the Bishop of Carlisle for his strong advocacy and saw the decision as giving space for the development of their preferred proposals.

'A Case for Ministerial Training in the North-West'²² was a paper produced by the CDTI Director in April 1994 in support of the status quo. In addition to appending the 1992 responses to The Lincoln Report, mentioned above, it also included an extensive geographical analysis of the course, with significant evidence both as to the demographic distribution of its students and also the topographical features of the catchment area. Dr. Ruth Etchells, in her 'Summary of main issues in Position Paper on theological training in the N.E. and Cumbria', August 1994,²³ took up the geographical issues and made the strong recommendation that CDTI should form a cluster arrangement with St. Martin's College, Lancaster, with a date for curriculum submission of autumn 1995. The battle for Cumbrian regional autonomy was, it seemed, substantially won and recorded as such the ABM Report for 1994.

The retention of CDTI as an autonomous institution had taken a great deal of effort over a long period and created a great deal of anxiety, not to mention absorbing energies which arguably could have been more constructively employed elsewhere. The battle is undoubtedly the most distinctive feature in the history of this particular Regional Course. One good result of the experience was the prompting to the academic relationship with St. Martin's University College, Lancaster, and this was formalised during 1995 and 1996. Another good

²¹ Letter from Archbishop of York to College and Course Principals, copied to all General Synod members, dated 14 January 1993.

²² In CDTI Future file, CDBTI archives.

²³ In CDTI Future file, CDBTI archives.

development was the broadening of boundaries which took place to include candidates from the Blackburn Diocese and also the Craven area of the Bradford Diocese, and in particular the sponsoring of a half-member of staff by the former. It was reported that the formal memorandum of co-operation with St. Martin's had been signed by the end of May 1996²⁴, whilst the change of name to the *Carlisle and Blackburn* Diocesan Training Institute was completely the beginning of July.²⁵

During the remainder of the 1990's there seems to have been only relatively minor issues affecting the development of CBDTI, such as the objections of members of the Forward in Faith movement to the possibility of the Course Principal (a woman) celebrating at Communion Services. Another hiccough was the withdrawal of the United Reformed Church from the Course Council during 1998. This was seen by the Church of England as a backwards step from Christian Unity. However the reason for CBDTI being removed from the list of the URC's Approved Ordination Training Institution was that they had no students on the Course and none in prospect, so the issue did not affect practical training issues.²⁶

As a final point in this brief history of CDTI/CBDTI, it is worth looking at the staffing situation in contrast with those who formed the initial complement. Whereas it was commented on above that the initial eight local tutors were perhaps on average less well-qualified than might have been expected, this situation had changed twenty years later. In the CBDTI Inspection Questionnaire and submission to the Ministry Division of 2000, there are four core numbers of staff listed, three with Masters' qualifications, one a Doctorate. Of the twenty-five local tutors, six

²⁴ Memorandum in Principal's Correspondence file, CBDTI archives.

²⁵ Correspondence in Principal's Correspondence file, CBDTI archives.

²⁶ Correspondence in Principal's Correspondence file, CBDTI archives.

held or were awaiting doctorates and twelve held Masters' degrees, although it must be said that not all the qualifications were in the subjects being tutored. Academic standards had risen, but it was still not demonstrated that every ordinand would be able to benefit from an equal degree of tutorial expertise.

II North-East Ordination Course (NEOC) North-East Oecumenical Course (NEOC)

If the Carlisle course could be described as one partner serving that part of England north of the Lancaster-Bridlington line, NEOC is the other. Whereas CBDTI serves the area to the West of the Pennines, NEOC serves the East. But whereas for much of its history, the former Course served principally the Carlisle Diocese, NEOC has been more diverse, for all of its history, and has served the Dioceses of Newcastle, Durham, York and Ripon, the first three mentioned from its inception.

NEOC was described in Chapter 2 as being very much in its early days in the late 1970's, having been founded in Durham in 1976. In March 2000, the Principal summarised what had happened in the intervening years:¹

It has certainly changed in many ways since those early days, principally through the extension of the catchment to take in the whole of North Yorkshire and the East Riding as well as Durham and Northumberland, the full oecumenical ownership of NEOC through a Board of Trustees, academic validation through the University of Sunderland, enlargement of staffing and partnership through consortia and clustering with other providers of theological education in the area.

Following the watershed decision of 1979 on validation for training for the Stipendiary Ministry, the initial issue for NEOC was how to provide the now

¹ Letter from T. Pitt, to the writer, dated 22 March 2000.

required full-time member of staff.² Locally it was doubted that the number of candidates likely to be drawn from the catchment area would ever warrant a full-time staff member. Yet minutes from June 1980 show a consciousness of being a larger Course than CDTS. There was also a desire to maintain strong links with St. John's College, Durham, and it was thought that a full time appointment might be seen by the staff at St. John's as constituting a threat. At the same time there was a report of possible desire for involvement on the part of the United Reformed Church and this was followed by the first two URC students entering NEOC the following year. All students were expected, at this point in NEOC's history, to attend weekly meetings in Durham,³ although by 1981 attempts were being made to base Biblical Studies at the University of Newcastle, complemented by another base possibly on Teeside; if not, in Durham.⁴

Anyone who holds to a traditional view of Christianity as being essentially a revealed faith might be more than slightly alarmed at the teaching policy agreed by the Governing Body in early 1982 when the Director of Studies presented:

The need to prepare our students to be *discoverers of belief*, both for themselves and with their laity, rather than merely givers of information about what Christians in the past have believed to be true.⁵

Reservations were also recorded within the Governing Body over what appeared to be a 'purely experiential' approach to doctrine.⁶

The number of students was reported by 1982 as having risen to a peak of 33.⁷ A discussion paper circulated by the Principal in October of the following year

² NEOC Minute Book, 27.2.79, NEOC archives.

³ NEOC Minute Book, 5.12.80, NEOC archives.

⁴ NEOC Minute Book, 20.3.81, NEOC archives.

⁵ NEOC Minute Book, 26.2.82, NEOC archives.

⁶ NEOC Minute Book, 5.11.82, NEOC archives.

made reference to one of the main issues faced by NEOC in the wake of this, in conjunction with the large geographical catchment area. It was reported that the Durham teaching centre had about 12 attendees with lectures tailored to their individual requirements. By contrast the Newcastle centre had its lectures organised by the University Department of Adult Education. These were open to members of the general public and the numbers thus attending were having the effect of removing all the corporate spirit experienced at Durham. By contrast again, students in the North of Northumberland and around York and Harrogate were having their entire curricula delivered not by teams of expert speakers, but by single local tutors.⁸ At one point, arrangements collapsed for the Worship course at Newcastle⁹ and tutors from Durham had to bale them out. By the time he reported this to the Governors, the Principal had already circulated the feeding dioceses and URC provinces with details of increased staffing needs, including the establishment of 'pools' of both academic and pastoral tutors. For the students' general benefit, and possibly to alleviate cases of reported isolation, a scheme whereby each student would work with a personal pastoral support group was mooted, based upon a similar scheme then adopted by the East Midlands Course. Meanwhile core staffing was also being increased, there being a full-time Principal from 1983 and a half-time Vice Principal from 1985,¹⁰ the latter post having been a strong recommendation emanating from ACCM in London.

⁷ Warden's Report, November 1982, NEOC Minute Book, NEOC Archives.

⁸ 'Structured Staffing of NEOC: A Discussion Paper', October 1983, NEOC Minute Book, NEOC archives.

⁹ Principals Report, 27.1.84, NEOC Minute Book, NEOC Archives.

¹⁰ Job description attached to Minutes, 1.2.85, Council Minutes file, NEOC archives.

One of the changes mooted by the new Principal in 1985 was a change in curriculum structure. The publication of ACCM Occasional Paper No. 15, 'An Integrating Theology', by Dean Peter Baelz of Durham in 1983 had obviously drawn attention to the teaching of five academic subjects (Old Testament, New Testament, Doctrine, Ethics and Worship) in a consecutive programme as being out of step with the new proposed approach. An alternative programme of more integrated distance-learning materials from SDMTS was considered but rejected.

That NEOC tutors were thought to be a cut above their SDMTS contemporaries is indicated by the following: 'but it quickly became clear that these units were prepared to meet a different situation from ours with regard to the tutorial expertise available, and that for many of our tutors they would be excessively inhibiting.'¹¹ Because of the wide geographical distribution of students, the need of a large tutor pool continued to be emphasised, and at the same time as the above curriculum proposals were published, it was reported that there were seventeen academic tutors in addition to the Principal, seven pastoral studies units tutors and twelve chaplains (the latter associated with the student support groups mentioned earlier). Another issue which arose at the same time was the pressure to diversify academically to provide a course working to a variety of standards, especially for older candidates.¹² An excerpt from notes dated December 1984 of a national body entitled 'Courses' Staffs' Sub-Committee on Staffing and Educational Design'¹³ indicates that NEOC was not the only Course struggling to develop its academic provision at that time:

¹¹ 'Curriculum Development and Course Structure', para.3, filed with Minutes, 10.5.85, Council Minutes file, NEOC archives.

¹² Principal's Report to NEOC Council, 4 October 1985, sub-section 'Recruitment of Older Candidates', Council Minutes file, NEOC archives.

¹³ Para. 3.6, Document filed in Minutes, 10.1.86, Council Minutes file, NEOC archives.

Courses are still in the early years of their development. It is only in the last three or four years that most courses have begun to move beyond the pattern of training inherited from the residential institutions and to ask questions about the strengths and weaknesses of part-time training and the educational implications. Innovation in itself is time consuming. Most courses need space for their core staff to carry out a constant review of the educational aims and to evaluate what they are doing in the light of those aims. This essential process cannot adequately be carried out by one person.

Overall at this time the picture painted by successive NEOC Council minutes is of a Course attempting to develop effectively in educational approach and content, whilst struggling with a student base geographically widespread, small in number (25-30 total) and increasingly diverse requirements. The drafting of new documentation to fulfil the requirements of ACCM 22 in 1987 was a part of this process.

The major proposals for re-organisation contained in ACCM 30 which were to prompt so much activity on the part of the Carlisle Course do not appear to have had such a high initial impact on the NEOC Council. In April 1989 there was some discussion about the need for a core staff presence in Yorkshire if the Course were to be given sole care of Ripon and York dioceses. It was also minuted that 'NEOC's future was intimately connected with that of NOC and the Carlisle Training Institute and consultations between the those Courses should be pursued immediately.'¹⁴ Slightly more ominous in tone was the excerpt from the Principal's Report of the same date, which recorded: 'It is as well that the major stage of curriculum development is now completed and that at this level we can look forward to a period of consolidation rather than continuing change. It may, however, be necessary to take steps to ensure that the changes arising from the ACCM working party's report do not undermine the Course's needs at this point.' Later in the

¹⁴ Minutes, 14.4.89, Council Minutes file, NEOC archives.

year,¹⁵ 'the members of Council expressed confidence in NEOC's present teaching programme, and agreed that a reorganisation which demanded fundamental revision of this programme should be resisted.' At this stage the principal reorganisation being reported on was the suggestion of ACCM 30 that NEOC should serve the region East of the Pennines and NOC the region to the West, other results of discussions with the Principals of NOC and CDTI also being tabled.¹⁶ It is evident from the written records that NEOC Council certainly did not feel as threatened about the parameters of their basic existence as CDTI. The Diocese of Newcastle was, however, concerned that nothing should be done to change NEOC from being self-consciously the Course for the North-East. It was felt that further expansion of the catchment area in Yorkshire might well mitigate against such an identification.¹⁷ The Principal believed that any ACCM-prompted moves to improve the numerical and financial viability of the Course might well be effective in destroying the recently-circulated coherent educational programme offered.¹⁸

With CDTI and NOC, NEOC took its place in resisting the ACCM – sponsored ideas for re-organisation. In answer to a paper from the Steering Group for Theological Courses entitled 'Two Possible Approaches for Consideration by the Northern Courses', a combined response group labelled what London had to offer as 'In their present form they [the ideas in the paper] have the feel of interesting ideas which could be applied almost anywhere and to any educational

¹⁵ Minutes, 13.10.89, Council Minutes file, NEOC archives.

¹⁶ Minutes, 9.2.90, attachment: 'ORDINATION TRAINING ON COURSES, A summary of recommendations with notes of possible Implications for Northern England', Council Minutes file, NEOC archives.

¹⁷ Minutes, 9.2.90, attachment: 'DIOCESE OF NEWCASTLE, Response to Questionnaire for steering Group for Theological Courses', Council Minutes file, NEOC archives.

¹⁸ Minutes, 8.6.90, attachment: Principal's Report, Council Minutes file, NEOC archives.

task’!¹⁹ The NEOC files document the change of approach by ACCM during 1991 to the question of Northern Course re-organisation. After this date the proposals from the ‘centre’ were to revolve around merging of CDTI and NEOC for the area north of a ‘Lancaster/ Bridlington’ line.²⁰ At an Extraordinary Meeting of Council held that November it is recorded that: ‘A majority of members felt that the coercive language and generalised approach of the Steering Group paper ought to be firmly resisted’,²¹ and furthermore, ‘It was noted that all three courses are delivering recently approved ACCM 22 curricula, and therefore any arguments for change are bound to be financial rather than educational.’

During 1992, the major innovation under discussion by NEOC, as with CDTI, was the possible setting up of a joint Board of Studies by the two Courses, by way of furthering their inter-relationship in response to the modified ACCM proposals. Other issues then current included developing ecumenical relationships with the United Reformed Church, designed to enable them to ‘own’ the Course and not just ‘use’ it,²² and on a different tack, the improvement of library facilities which had increased by some 2,250 volumes.

The self-confidence with which NEOC seems to have been participating in regional discussions when compared with CDTI is marked. Undoubtedly, one reason for this was the then largest ever NEOC student body in the 1992/93 academic year,²³ which placed it well-above the published viability level for

¹⁹ CDTI, NEOC and NOC, ‘A Response to “Two possible approaches for consideration by the Northern Courses”’, attached to Minutes, 18.1.91, Council Minutes file, NEOC archives.

²⁰ Minutes, 7.11.91., attachment: ‘Report of Meeting between ACCM 30 Steering Group and Northern Courses, York – 15 November 1991’, Council Minutes file, NEOC archives.

²¹ Minutes, 7.11.91, Council Minutes file, NEOC archives.

²² Minutes, 23.11.92, attachment: Principal’s Report, Council Minutes file, NEOC archives.

²³ Minutes, 23.11.92, attachment: Principal’s Report, Council Minutes file, NEOC archives.

Courses in ACCM 30 and perhaps also led to thoughts of pressing ahead with curriculum development without waiting for the Carlisle Course.²⁴ This development seems to have issued in proposals in 1993 to seek academic validation of the whole NEOC curriculum from the University of Sunderland with a view to awarding a Dip HE, on the completion representing a CATS credit rating of 240 points. The significant factor in choice of Sunderland seems to have been that institution's willingness to offer academic validation to both practical and pastoral aspects of the Course. From that point on, academic networking concentrated on the regional clustering of theological institutions in the North-East instead of proposed enforced trans-Pennine mergers.²⁵ NEOC was informed by ABM in September 1994 that it officially no longer wished to pursue proposed links with CDTI. The Principal attributed this to 'the result of recommendations made to the Steering Group by Dr. Ruth Etchells after visiting all the institutions involved' and reported, 'With this block removed, NEOC is free to develop a sound strategy for the future.'²⁶ An impediment to developing the clustering ideas was unfortunately discovered at an early stage due to 'the radically different delivery modes of College and Course, one based on a teaching centre, the other dispersed across the country through local tutors'.²⁷

Having re-established its stability as an institution for the foreseeable future, the need was nevertheless expressed at Council for further consolidation. Possible involvement was mooted with Reader training, Local Ordained Ministry and

²⁴ Minutes, 23.11.92, attachment: 'A Response to the Lincoln Report (on behalf of NEOC Council)', Council Minutes file, NEOC archives.

²⁵ Minutes, 18.11.93, attachment: Principal's Report, Council Minutes file, NEOC archives.

²⁶ Minutes, 9.12.94, attachment: Principal's Report, Council Minutes file, NEOC archives.

²⁷ Minutes, 9.12.94, attachment: Principal's Report, Council Minutes file, NEOC archives.

Students from Sunderland University. In a discussion about future Church needs, the Principal shared his vision that the future of the ordained ministry lay with NSM's. The discussion seems to have been terminated with the surprising minute that 'it was pointed out that Durham Diocese did not know what to do with NSM's although much had been published.'²⁸ A paper emanating from Cranmer Hall, Durham, concerning partnerships in theological education, addressed a number of possibilities for the practical effect of clustering arrangements in the North-east, even allowing for a long-term radical partnership between Cranmer and NEOC in providing mixed-mode initial theological training. The paper finished with a suitable caveat: 'However, it would appear that NEOC and Cranmer hall need to start more modestly at present with their mixed-mode ideas, since there is more ground to be travelled in effective partnership than in some other parts of the country.'²⁹ That the Principal of NEOC was committed to the new clustering movement was clear. An excerpt from his report for march 1995 describes the ethos.³⁰

Future development of theological provision in the region must avoid competition between institutions for the same candidates, and relationships between institutions must respect and preserve the integrity of the programmes offered. The future lies in increasing partnership and co-operation between programmes, rather than simple franchising arrangements.

One of the effects of the new clustering arrangements within regions was to also encourage the converse, i.e. non-competition, for candidates between regions. Filed with NEOC Minutes for 29.3.95 is an 'Agreed Code of Practice between NOC

²⁸ Minutes, 9.12.94, Council Minutes file, NEOC archives.

²⁹ Minutes, 29.3.95, attachment: 'Partnerships in Theological Education, the North East, Cranmer Hall perspective', Council Minutes file, NEOC archives.

³⁰ Minutes, 29.3.95, attachment: Principal's Report, Council Minutes file, NEOC archives.

and NEOC', which indicates that a prospective candidate had to make a very strong case for 'crossing the line' in order to join the other Course if he or she lived outside the geographical catchment area. Naturally to ensure stability, such arrangements were and are necessary, but the document is mentioned for one principal condition mentioned therein, namely, 'a strong case must be made: it is not regarded only as a matter of personal choice'. This is evidence for the compulsory nature of attending ones local Course if training for ordination part-time, in contrast with the free choice of all the residential colleges in training full-time.

Another development of the work of NEOC for 1995 was a pilot-scheme for collaboration in connection with Reader training for the Diocese of Durham³¹ but a fall back to 24 ordination candidates from a peak of 36 was also causing anxieties about budget deficits and the need to cut staff levels. That the Course was operating in one sense on a knife-edge was pointed out by the reminder that the margin between the Course being notionally full and its being at the lower level of educational viability was only six students.³² At the same time it appeared that efforts at 'clustering' were proving somewhat one-sided, it being reported that whilst Cranmer Hall now had a representative on the NEOC Council, there was no reciprocation.³³ More positive was the introduction of 0.75 member of staff from September 1996, paid for by the United Reformed Church,³⁴ at which time further diversification was also reported through possible training for a Local Non-

³¹ Minutes, 19.9.95, attachment: Principal's Report, Council Minutes file, NEOC archives.

³² Minutes, 13.12.95, attachment: 'Annual accounts-implication for future funding and strategy', Council Minutes file, NEOC archives.

³³ Minutes, 13.12.95, Council Minutes file, NEOC archives.

³⁴ Minutes, 27.3.96, attachment: Principal's Report, Council Minutes file, NEOC archives.

Stipendiary Ministry Scheme for Newcastle Diocese. Indeed, development of the ethos and task of NEOC was seen to have been such since its inception, that a 'Strategy Working Group' reported that its first main task was to define 'a clear statement of what NEOC now is'.³⁵ In answer to this a then recent paper from the Principal to the Archbishop of York was tabled in which the headings used to describe NEOC were, 'Contextual, Local, Regional and Dispersed, Ecumenical, Flexible, Collaborative, Formative, Student-centred, Mixed-mode / part-residential, and Accredited'.³⁶ It was decided to retain the NEOC acronym, but to alter the title represented to 'North East Oecumenical Course',³⁷ at the cost of an invented diphthong!

A still further diversification occurred for NEOC in 1993 when it was agreed to train a group of candidates for the Diocese of Europe.³⁸ In the same year a formal statement of intent was issued in connection with collaboration between NEOC and the Newcastle LNSM Training Scheme.³⁹ The reciprocation of NEOC representation on the Cranmer Hall Committee was also made good,⁴⁰ but it was not proposed to progress the clustering process in the North East into a federation style

³⁵ Minutes, 27.3.96, Council Minutes file, NEOC archives.

³⁶ Minutes, 27.3.96, attachment: 'Report of the Strategy Working Group', Council Minutes file, NEOC archives.

³⁷ Minutes, 30.5.96, Council Minutes file, NEOC archives.

³⁸ Minutes, 15.1.97, Council Minutes file, NEOC archives.

³⁹ Attached to Minutes, 8.9.97, Council Minutes file, NEOC archives.

⁴⁰ Minutes, 8.9.97, attachment: Principal's Report, Council Minutes file, NEOC archives.

cluster, rather to continue with mutual conversation and exploration.⁴¹ It seems that at the time the partnership with Durham Readers was thought of as very poor.⁴²

Perhaps the move of premises for NEOC from accommodation provided by Durham Diocese, to the Roman Catholic Ushaw College as from December 1998,⁴³ is a suitable point to leave this brief history of the North East Ordination/Oecumenical Course. The overall picture is one of a successful and distinctively regional Course which has usually been at the lower limit of viability and which has therefore had to remain especially assiduous in networking with both theological education providers and consumers in the region in order to maintain that viability during rapidly changing times. The Principal's Report of June 1998 witnessed to this thus:⁴⁴

NEOC has been growing and expanding rapidly in the changing world of theological education. Discerning future patterns is still far from easy. Clustering with other providers, expanding delivery to include Readers, OLM's and University undergraduates while seeking to work alongside the different policies of dioceses and sponsoring churches, makes NEOC infinitely more complex than it was five years ago.

⁴¹ Minutes, 12.12.97, attachment: 'Report on the Clustering Process in the North East', Council Minutes file, NEOC archives.

⁴² Minutes, 12.12.97, Council Minutes file, NEOC archives.

⁴³ Minutes, 5.11.98, attachment: Principal's Report, Council Minutes file, NEOC archives.

⁴⁴ Minutes, 12.6.98, attachment: Principals' Report, Council Minutes file, NEOC archives.

III North West Ordination Course (NWOC) Northern Ordination Course (NOC)

The Northern Ordination Course (before 1979 named the North West Ordination Course) is the oldest established of all the Regional Theological Courses currently active and serving the Church of England. The following is very much a digest of what was happening during the relevant years of this chapter, taken from the substantial archives available.

Although the history of the first decade of the Course's existence has already been outlined in Chapter 2, where it was labelled 'a serious and successful academic institution from the outset', the following synopsis of Course history, extracted from the 2000 Prospectus, may provide a useful index to the further details which follow:

1970

North West Ordination Course formed by The Anglican dioceses of Chester, Blackburn, Liverpool and Manchester but open to students from other denominations.

1980

Re-named the Northern Ordination Course with the added sponsorship of the Wakefield, Bradford, Sheffield, Ripon and York dioceses of the Church of England and the Methodist Church.

1984

Joined the Northern Federation for Training in Ministry with commitment to working with the Methodist, Baptist, United Reformed, Unitarian and Methodist Colleges in Manchester from a base at Luther King House.

1990

Began Co-operation with the University College of Ripon and York St. John for Course teaching and validation.

1992

The Northern Federation for Training in Ministry becomes Local Ecumenical Project.

1996

The Northern Ordination Course begins working with the Community and College of the Resurrection, Mirfield, as part of the Mirfield Centre.

1998

The Northern Federation for Training in Ministry becomes the Partnership for Theological Education, Manchester and the Northern Ordination Course becomes a partner.

The change of name, to 'Northern Ordination Course', deleting the descriptive 'West' was planned from 1979, and reflected both the initiatives which had already taken place East of the Pennines and negotiations over sponsorship which were in progress with the dioceses of Wakefield, Bradford, Sheffield, Ripon and York.¹ This was a time of growth in student numbers and the total of 64 in autumn 1979 was expected to reach 70 in 1980.² Because of possible problems with staffing related to this increase, the Council gave the Principal discretionary powers to limit the total to 75.³ Teaching groups were then currently meeting in Liverpool, Manchester and Leeds, and in 1980 the administrative centre was moved to the Northern Baptist College in Manchester.⁴ The United Reformed Church decided at about this time to develop a Non-Stipendiary ministry and inquired as to whether it could participate in NOC. The quality of ecumenical commitment can perhaps be gauged from the following quote from Standing Committee Minutes:⁵

The Principal raised the question of URC participation and a discussion followed on the desirability of asking the Council to establish an ecumenical "quota" and a closing date for ecumenical admissions. It was realised that there were "political" implications in the sponsoring dioceses and that the issue was delicate.

¹ Council Minutes, 27 February 1979, Council Minutes file, NOC archives.

² Principal's Report, 13 November 1979, Principal's Reports file, NOC archives.

³ Council Minutes, 13 November 1979, Council Minutes file, NOC archives.

⁴ Principal's Report, 18 November 1980, Principal's Reports file, NOC archives.

⁵ Standing Committee Minutes, 28 January 1981, Standing Committee file, NOC archives.

It is worth noting that Methodist participation had already been established and there may have been fears of a Nonconformist takeover. However, since in March 1981 inquiries for entry in autumn 1981 were standing at only one each from both the other Churches, this was not really an issue in practice.⁶ Perhaps there were certain concerns circulating following the Principals and Staffs conference in January 1981, where there was stress laid on 'the importance of Colleges and Courses for the teaching of *Anglican* doctrine now that this plays a much less important part in the university syllabuses'.⁷

There was a continuing debate in the Church of England in the early 1980's about the provision of ecumenical training in Manchester. One strand of thinking had been that a residential Anglican facility should be present. Another was that there should be a closer relationship between those various denominational institutions already operating there.⁸ At this time a move of headquarters from the Northern Baptist College to St. Anselm's Hall (where there were better facilities found to be available) was hotly debated within NOC, and eventually defeated primarily due to concern about ecumenical relationships.⁹ As ecumenical discussions progressed, one stumbling block, unique to Manchester, was the possibility of Unitarian involvement in any Federation of training institutions.¹⁰ Meanwhile there were domestic problems of growth with lists being closed in March 1983 for the following autumn's student entry, due to exceptionally large

⁶ Principal's Report, 20 March 1981, Principal's Reports file, NOC archives.

⁷ Principal's Report, 20 March 1981, Principal's Reports file, NOC archives.

⁸ E.g. Council Minutes, 23 June 1982, Council Minutes file. Also 'Ecumenical Training for Ministry in Manchester', paper dated January 1982, Miscellaneous file, NOC archives.

⁹ Council Minutes, 20 July 1982, Council Minutes file, NOC archives.

¹⁰ Council Minutes, 18 March 1983, Council Minutes file, NOC archives.

numbers of applicants. 'Double figures' of candidates were being told they would have to wait to start their training, and 'two-form' entry for 1984 was being discussed.¹¹ A Bishops' Inspection was due in 1984, and the staff were very positive in wishing to help the Inspectors to understand NOC's situation, so that the best advice might be forthcoming about plans for the future.¹²

Issues being faced at the time of the 1984 Inspection included whether the curriculum was too rigid. A 'take it or leave it attitude' on the part of NOC had been identified by some. But others saw the 'discipline' of NOC as a major strength, suggesting that 'diversity' and 'flexibility' were the province of other Courses. Standing Committee minutes of December 1983 indicate that the two basic dimensions of the 'rigidity' were the policy of never allowing dispensations from parts of the course to students, no matter how well qualified, and the difficulties imposed on outlying students in having to travel to teaching centres for their input. In addition a part-time member of staff questioned whether the Course might be running out of creativity given that students were not encouraged to share their own experience and knowledge, but merely to receive the wisdom of mentors.¹³ Pastoral care of students was also an issue for debate. The Principal was strongly against the use of Local Tutors for teaching, but no member of NOC staff lived east of the Pennines. However, it should be pointed out that the Principal was himself accustomed to visiting the latter group of students annually at home, in a policy which may well have offered better care than many of the Courses with a less dispersed student body.¹⁴

¹¹ Principal's Report, 18 March 1983, Principal's Reports file, NOC archives.

¹² Council Minutes, 6 October 1983, Council Minutes file, NOC archives.

¹³ Council Minutes, 13 June 1984, Council Minutes file, NOC archives.

¹⁴ Principal's Report, 6 October 1983, Principal's Reports file, NOC archives.

The Northern Federation for Training in Ministry was formally inaugurated in October 1984, following the ecumenical discussions referred to.¹⁵ But it was the report of the Inspectors which took the limelight when it appeared a few weeks later. It is obvious that those at NOC were disappointed with the results. 'In general terms the Standing Committee welcomed the Report, but felt that some ideological presuppositions had gone into its making and that the Inspectors had exceeded their brief.'¹⁶ The Principal's observations¹⁷ include sections which read more as if it were the Bishops' Inspectors who were the subject of the inspection. Two sections in particular are reproduced in full as giving evidence for a possible trend in Inspection in ignoring crucial educational issues:

3. In two other important areas there is a strange silence. There is no mention of the doctrinal content of the Course, unless it is contained in the remark that it is 'soundly based'. This at a time when doctrinal standards are a matter of keen debate in the Church of England. Nor is there any mention of the way in which the Course deals with the variety of ecclesiastical traditions from which students come. This is a matter of major concern for sending parishes and dioceses and denominations, and bishops and other church leaders might have looked for some reassurance in this direction.

6. We do actually believe that 'covering the ground' is important. Ministers need to be able to operate freely and skilfully within their tradition, and they cannot do that if they do not know what the tradition is. Students on the Course will not consciously remember everything they meet, but they may subsequently remember that a certain matter was at least on the syllabus, and will be able to refresh their memories.

Notwithstanding certain doubts about the Inspection, syllabus revisions were undertaken with rapid efficiency. Apparently ACCM expressed surprise at the exercise having taken only a few months.¹⁸ The House of Bishops' Moderator of

¹⁵ Principal's Report, 2 October 1984, Principal's Reports file, NOC archives.

¹⁶ Standing Committee Minutes, 16 May 1985, Standing Committee file, NOC archives.

¹⁷ 'The Principal's Observations on the 1984 Inspection', Principal's Reports file, NOC archives.

¹⁸ Principal's Report, 14 June 1985, Principal's Reports file, NOC archives.

Inspections came specially to one post-Inspection meeting, because he could not understand how a Course could have both a reputation for excellence, and a reputation for extreme conservatism!¹⁹

Following the debate about the asserted rigidity of NOC, there was obviously an amount of thought put into the Course's proper direction for the future, and a paper on possible diversification²⁰ at the beginning of 1986 raised the options of catering specifically for the needs of a number of different groups, including theology graduates, other graduates under thirty,* shift workers, those with more time, and candidates for Local Non-Stipendiary Ministry. This was the beginning of an extensive programme of discussions in which the nine sponsoring Diocesan Bishops were involved from the beginning.²¹ 'Diversification' was to appear on the agenda of many subsequent NOC meetings, and in February 1987 the possibility of a radical restructuring of the entire curriculum to conform to a modular approach was first mooted.²² There was not a quick conclusion to the matter this time, however, and attention started to be paid to the next Inspection, due in January 1989, but more particularly to the retirement of the Principal, due in the same month.²³

In his outgoing address the Principal voiced two main fears for the future of theological education:²⁴

¹⁹ Principal's Report, 22 October 1985, Principal's Reports file, NOC archives.

²⁰ 'NOC – Possible Diversification', a discussion paper dated January 1986, Papers to Council file, NOC archives.

²¹ Principal's Report, 12 June 1986, Principal's Reports file, NOC archives.

²² 'NOC-Possible Diversification', a staff paper dated February 1987, Papers to Council file, NOC archives.

²³ E.g. Minutes of Standing Committee, 16 September 1987, Standing Committee file, NOC archives.

²⁴ NOC Retrospect, Principal's address, December 1988, Principal's Reports file, NOC archives.

- The shallow liberalism of the '60's and '70's – whose students are today's teachers.
- Reducing the divine relationship to the human relationship, making ministry all pastoral skills and no Gospel. (The last inspection focused entirely on method, with no comment on content – like a wine-taster concerned only with the shape of the bottle and the design of the label).

These fears will be returned to in the chapter on issues of curriculum.

The arrival of the new Principal in January 1989 coincided with the next Inspection and also with the beginning of consideration of issues arising from ACCM 30. Whereas the North-Eastern and Carlisle courses were being encouraged to join together across the Pennines, where they were working independently, NOC was encouraged to cease operations across the Pennines, where it was working effectively. This was seen as a 'misuse of geography' by the NOC Council.²⁵ Later in the year the Inspection report was received much more favourably than the one before, and the new Principal was able to report that the new submission to ACCM (under ACCM 22 requirements) had been successfully completed.²⁶ Other aspects of what the incoming Principal called 'a time of change and challenge' for NOC included a report from the Methodist Church about training on courses, and the inception of the new Manchester scheme for training for the Local Non-Stipendiary Ministry. His verdict on the future was that 'the Course will have to go through a complete re-think to prepare it for the 1990's'.²⁷

Change is always difficult and NOC proved no exception. Certainly the task at NOC to work towards diversification was more difficult than anticipated, the

²⁵ Council Minutes, 24 February 1989, Council Minutes file, NOC archives.

²⁶ Council Minutes, 24 November 1989, Council Minutes file, NOC archives.

²⁷ Principal's Report, 24 February 1989, Principal's Reports file, NOC archives.

principal reason being the conservatism of staff.²⁸ Another reason, however, was the rejection by ACCM of a new pattern of mixed-mode training which had absorbed considerable time in the detailed planning in conjunction with Cranmer Hall, Durham. (Yet schemes in other parts of the country were shortly to be accepted.) Fortunately the practical discussion of ACCM 30 issues proved far less threatening for NOC than was the case for some of the other Courses, and seems to have absorbed relatively less effort. The fluctuation of the student body also seems to have been far less than in some other places: for instance the 1990/91 total of 70²⁹ was very much in line with the Course size several years before.

In parallel with changes at NOC, an initiative was taken which was to result in the Northern Federation becoming a Local Ecumenical Project. This somewhat unusual step was seen as an encouragement for ecumenical relationships which would give the Federation a formal place within the structure of Churches Together in England. There were also seen to be advantages for NOC in that certain inter-denominational worship activities would be regularised and students gain in understanding which might relate directly to their own future ministerial service, if in an LEP.³⁰ The issue of possible full-time training for Anglicans with the Federation (based at Luther King House, Manchester) was again raised, this time by the NOC Standing Committee, and the Bishop of Lincoln contacted.³¹ This in itself is another insight into the relationship of NOC in respect of ACCM 30 negotiations – Courses generally were much more likely to be muttering arguments against the Bishop of Lincoln, rather than forwarding positive or innovative suggestions!

²⁸ Principal's Report, 28 June 1990, Principal's Reports file, NOC archives.

²⁹ Standing Committee minutes, 14 September 1990, Standing Committee files, NOC archives.

³⁰ Memorandum dated 19 February 1991, Papers to Council file, NOC archives.

³¹ Standing Committee Minutes, 14 May 1991, Standing Committee file, NOC archives.

As part of the process of change, the academic validation of the NOC curriculum was an issue and in 1991 discussions were in progress with the University of Leeds and the University of Manchester.³² In addition a one-year experiment was in progress involving work at Chester College.³³ This was effectively a change of venue for the Liverpool group, and made possible access to the modular degree programme of the Chester institution. The following year a relationship was agreed with the College of Ripon and York St. John.³⁴ From September 1992, modular units leading to a postgraduate qualification became available at the Manchester centre, under the supervision of Chester College (awarding Liverpool University degrees).³⁵ The search for appropriate academic development was not without its setbacks, however, and the external examiner to NOC at one point expressed the most profound comment found in connection with validation of any of the Regional Courses, when he said 'Quite frankly I am horrified that the kind of course you describe being offered by Chester College of Higher Education, or indeed by the other colleges, should qualify anybody for a B Phil or an M Ed. In the light of the abolition of the binary divide and of competition for funds, I see this kind of move contributing in a disastrous way to the erosion of academic standards'.³⁶ (It should be noted that this criticism was not directed directly at the content of NOC teaching, of which he was generally highly

³² Standing Committee Minutes, 3 September 1991, Standing Committee file, NOC archives.

³³ Council Minutes, 5 March 1991, Council Minutes file, NOC archives.

³⁴ Council Minutes, 27 March 1992, Council Minutes file, NOC archives.

³⁵ Acting Principal's Report, June 1992, Principal's Reports file, NOC archives.

³⁶ Correspondence dated 10 December 1991, Correspondence file, NOC archives.

supportive.³⁷⁾ Another setback was in the rejection of an initiative that would have seen the reconstitution of part-time training in Manchester as a wholly ecumenical venture under the auspices of the Northern Federation. Finally, in the heated national discussions which took place between the publication of the Lincoln and Hereford Reports, all suggestion of developing an Anglican residential training capacity in Manchester was side stepped.³⁸

One academic issue which seemed to set NOC aside from the rest was the prior learning of its students. In 1994 the Principal reported that most candidates were either already graduates or had equivalent professional qualifications. Collaboration with the Northern Federation on a new diploma and degree programme franchised from Manchester University was decided against due to the model of undergraduate study involved. Moves were set in progress to provide instead a standard NOC M.A. route via the Chester/Ripon validation system.³⁹ The numbers of NOC students were gradually rising, which was an encouragement at a time when overall ordinand numbers were falling. The student body for 1994/95 stood at 75.⁴⁰ Following the Hereford Report, which both reprieved Mirfield Theological College and encouraged regional clustering, negotiations were put in hand to make that institution also a study centre for NOC students. However, alarm was also raised about Theological College relationships, as ABM proposals for Mixed-mode Training, published in the mid'90's, were seen to commend this being

³⁷ For example, see Report on the Northern Ordination Course, 22 December 1992, Correspondence file, NOC archives.

³⁸ Principal's Report, November 1993, Principal's Reports file, NOC archives.

³⁹ Principal's Report, June 1994, Principal's Reports file, NOC archives.

⁴⁰ Principal's Report, November 1994, Principal's Reports file, NOC archives.

an initiative of Colleges rather than Courses.⁴¹ If this was seen likely to take students away from NOC, at the same time a measure of joint working was entered into with the Liverpool Diocesan Local Non-Stipendiary Scheme which, from one point of view, had the opposite effect.⁴²

The 1996/97 academic year started with a record total of 89 students.⁴³ Staffing rose to the equivalent of five full-time and NOC seems to have enjoyed a buoyant feeling in the context of what was reported as a rising intake generally in the Church of England to Non-Stipendiary Ministry. One of the worries that the Principal voiced in this context was the 'narrow congregational focus' which most students brought to the Course. At the same time there was a need voiced for splitting the course into individual year groups because of growing size.⁴⁴ The success of NOC was, it seems, to mitigate against its ability to deal with such parochialism. This was offset ecumenically by continuing very strong support from the Methodist Church for training of candidates on NOC.⁴⁵ But nothing could be done to balance the trend towards the increasing ratio of women students: a proportion of 3:1 women to men was reported for 1997/98.⁴⁶

Accessible archives cease in 1998 at a time of change for NOC. There was a new Course Constitution and Council implemented and the then Principal was about to leave. Financial difficulties were being expressed about the use of Martin Luther House as an administrative centre and in connection with the Northern

⁴¹ Principal's Report, November 1995, Principal's Reports file, NOC archives.

⁴² Principal's Report, March 1996, Principal's Reports file, NOC archives.

⁴³ Principal's Report, November 1996, Principal's Reports file, NOC archives.

⁴⁴ Principal's Report, June 1998, Principal's Reports file, NOC archives.

⁴⁵ Council Minutes, 23 June 1995, Principal's Reports file, NOC archives.

⁴⁶ Standing Committee Minutes, 14 January 1997, Standing Committee file, NOC archives.

Federation. NOC seems to have been feeling that the Federation was not working on the basis for which it was set up.⁴⁷ NOC entered the 1980's with a reputation for a conservative approach which fostered academic excellence. Its history over the next twenty years illustrates growth in numbers, but a much more significant growth in complexity of curriculum, delivery and administrative organisation. For a given number of students, its history well illustrates the dramatically increased complexity of delivering an equivalent theological education compared with the case a generation before.

IV South West Ministerial Training Course (SWMTC) (Previously the Exeter/Truro Non Stipendiary Ministry Scheme)

The South West Course is treated next, not as having any direct relationship with the previous three Courses but as sharing with them the distinction of having survived on geographical grounds the common threat of amalgamation posed by ACCM 30 and the Lincoln Report during the early 1990's. In chapter 2, it was noted that the subsequently renamed Exeter/Truro NSM Scheme was founded in 1978, just before the watershed decision of 1979 to validate all Courses for training also for Stipendiary Ministry. A confident self-understanding was demonstrated by the draft prospectus which included in its prologue:

... non-residential training is no new thing... strictly residential training is a far too recent a development to be regarded as normative;

⁴⁷ Council Minutes, 26 March 1998, M.P.'s NOC Council file, NOC archives.

... the Regional, non-residential schemes, have been set up for not wholly financial or expedient reasons. Our South-West Scheme is no second-best and it is certainly no soft option. Those considering entry to the course must be prepared for considerable sacrifices in time, money and domestic comfort.¹

From the beginning of the Exeter-Truro Scheme, one of its great strengths was the very close collaboration with the University of Exeter and the use of the Exeter University Certificate in Theology as a substantial part of the training offered. Advantages were seen in students being able to gain ready access to university teaching and being able to gain an external certification (not general among the Regional Courses until some twenty years later). One of the corresponding disadvantages found, however, was that the Certificate syllabus only covered a relatively narrow section of New Testament and Doctrine when compared with GME requirements. This meant that other issues had to be provided for, which extended student commitments beyond what was thought desirable. At the same time, because the certificate took up two full academic years, the balance of GME requirements had very much to be squeezed to fit into the time that was left, in the context of a three-year part-time Course.² Obviously the advantages of the collaboration with Exeter University were seen to outweigh the disadvantages, and the working relationship between Course and University has been a distinctive feature ever since.

Numbers of students were erratic during the early days, and there was no intake in 1981; however by the academic year 1983-4, there were reported to be six candidates on the Course from Truro Diocese and further 19 from Exeter. The early

¹ South-West Regional Training Scheme: Draft Prospectus, In Board of Studies file, SWMTC archives.

² This insight is gained from a Discussion Paper (undated) for the Board of Studies, filed in the Board of Training file, SWMTC archives.

ecumenical involvement in the south-west was shown by two of the latter number being Nonconformist candidates from the Methodist and United Reformed Churches.³ Candidates for stipendiary ministry had started to use the course already by this time, and in October 1981 the name formally was changed to 'The Exeter/Truro Ministerial Training Scheme',⁴ thereby leaving out the 'non-stipendiary'.

In the early 1980's, there is evidence that the joint Directors of the Scheme for the two dioceses were feeling some 'central' pressure to become a more unified Regional Course in terms of structure, the existence of the parallel Directorship being unique, and obviously felt by some to be out of place. But the arrangement was thought locally to be working well and a particular character of the geographical area served whereby in both dioceses all students could maintain some semblance of pastoral contact with the person directing their studies.⁵ The position of the Directors was upheld by the Bishop of Exeter, but the Bishop of Truro saw the need to take unification further for three reasons; educational, political and financial.⁶ At the Council meeting on 18 November 1983 a number of reports concerning various aspects of potential unification were commissioned and as an interim measure, the name of the course was again changed, this time to the 'South West Ministerial Training Course', the name it has subsequently maintained.⁷

³ Minutes on the Board of Training, 6.10.83, Board of Training file, SWMTC archives.

⁴ Minutes 9 October, 1981, Council file, SWMTC archives.

⁵ 'The Unification of the Exeter – Truro Ministerial Training Scheme' – an undated paper in the Board of Training file, filed with Minutes of 6.10.83, SWMTC archives.

⁶ Minutes 18 November 1983, Council file, SWMTC archives.

⁷ Minutes, 18 November 1983, Council file, SWMTC archives.

In a further paper by two other members of the joint Council entitled 'Is a single Director for the two Dioceses beneficial?', a number of particular factors were cited in support of maintenance of the status quo, rather than unification. Firstly there were three geographic/demographic factors in relation to the pastoral care of students (a) only two dioceses; (b) a relatively small total number of students; (c) a very large area with poor road communications. But in addition it was alleged that Truro Diocese had a track record of admitting students to the Course very much at the sole personal judgement of the Bishop. Schizophrenia was forecast if one single Director might have in the future to deal with two very different admissions policies on the part of the dioceses! Whilst the joint summer school was endorsed as exemplifying the real unity already present on the Course, possible joint weekends were dismissed as impractical due to the over-long travelling distances they would require some students to travel. Doubt was also expressed as to whether any academic improvement could take place in connection with unification given the high standard of what was already taking place. Nevertheless, at Council on 16 April 1984, it was resolved that 'SWMTC will be best served in its development by a planned working towards a single director operating a wholly unified scheme.'⁸

Following the departure of one of the Directors in 1986 to a new post, the Bishop of Crediton called together a working party which recommended that the single Director resolution be implemented.⁹ It was expected that student fees would be affected by a rise of some 50% from the then level of £1000 per annum, mainly because the staff costs of the new Director would no longer be masked by payment

⁸ Letters from the Bishop of Crediton, dated April 1986, Council file, SWMTC archives.

⁹ Held in Council file, SWMTC archives.

through the parochial system. The new Director, it was proposed, should be a genuine full-time appointment, rather than a notional part-time one in conjunction with a 'light-duty' parish. It was recognised that if student numbers were to fall significantly, say as far as 18, it could render the reorganisation non-viable. The establishment of a third academic centre at Plymouth, in addition to the Diocesan centres of Exeter and Truro, was also recommended, in order to take advantage of the facilities in that place.

Previous concerns about the pastoral care of students were countered by the suggestion that there should be a strengthening of responsibility and devolution to the local tutors. In answer to subsequent Council concerns about the likely level of fee increases, some further planning was undertaken and it was then proposed to continue to charge the new postholder's stipend to the Central Stipends Authority by attaching a nominal 'cure of souls'. It was stated that this would not prejudice the notion of 'Honest Costing', because such a notion was 'unlikely to give any clearer answers since the allotment of time to costs in the rather flexible working methods of the Church of England is always subject to some arbitrariness'.¹⁰ At the subsequent meeting of Council on 8 December 1986 it was decided to proceed with a single director system, but all reference to intended date was deleted.¹¹ In furtherance of the reorganisation proposals, the Constitution was also re-examined at about this time. Various changes in the membership of the Council were suggested, as well as the replacement of both the Board of Studies and the Finance Committee by a single Executive Committee, to meet quarterly.¹² Surprisingly, a

¹⁰ "Working Party additional report," 8 Dec 1986, Council file, SWMTC archives.

¹¹ Council minutes 8 December 1986, SWMTC Joint Council, file, SWMTC archives. It had been tabled that the single director scheme should be implemented by 1 September 1988 at the latest.

¹² 'Report of the Working Party on the Constitution', undated, SWMTC Joint Council file, SWMTC archives.

full year later¹³ it was being reported that the Bishops' Inspectors were about to recommend formally that the Joint Directorate system should be retained for at least another two years.

The first indication of the issues concerning size and regionalisation with which the Carlisle and North East Courses had had to cope in the early 1990's came for SWMTC in 1988 when the Exeter Joint Director, who also served on the ACCM Working Party on the Finance and Structure of Courses, gave private warning of the need being discussed nationally for smaller Courses to federate with others. The implications of this for SWMTC were not clear, as the previously neighbouring Bristol School of Ministry was reported to have closed. Possible development on ecumenical terms was mooted instead.¹⁴ At the following meeting further warning was given from the same quarter, in anticipation of the publication of ACCM30, that the 1988 Course intake at just four candidates fell well short of the newly assessed minimum viability level of eight to ten candidates annually.¹⁵

In connection with the Bishops' Inspection mentioned above, a very different issue was mentioned as the Executive Committee was formulating its response to the Inspection Report. It seems that the Inspectors must have commented on a low diocesan level of awareness of the Course and the committee said, 'There appeared to be, at diocesan level, a lack of support for, and understanding of, the efforts of the lecturing clergy and the time needed to prepare and lecture.'¹⁶ Although not particularly significant in the history of SWMTC, this comment is worth quoting because of the wider issue of 'effort subsidy' upon which

¹³ Council Minutes, 6 November 1987, Minutes for Signature file, SWMTC archives.

¹⁴ Council Minutes, 29 April 1988, Minutes for Signature file, SWMTC archives.

¹⁵ Council Minutes, 21 November 1988, Minutes for Signature file, SWMTC archives.

¹⁶ Executive Committee Report, 14 April 1988, Joint Council SWMTC file, SWMTC archives.

all Regional Courses rely, but which is rarely accounted for at cost when considering the relative expense of training people on the Regional Courses in comparison with the Colleges. A related point was made at another meeting at about the same time, this time of Course staff, when it was questioned: 'Can occasional staff with other full-time appointments be realistically expected to undertake regular training? There are severe time and geographical constraints on a course like ours.'¹⁷ From other documentation, it seems likely that part-time staff felt neither understood by their Diocese, nor by Bishops' Inspectors!¹⁸

During 1989 further consideration was given to the ACCM 30 proposals for the restructuring of Courses. A minute from the Executive Committee lists responses to the Report which starts with, 'The attitude of SWMTC to the proposals should be constructive and welcoming,' and continues, 'SWMTC, while gaining expertise from Bath/Wells and Bristol with whom it may have to merge, should aim at preserving its own good and proven qualities.'¹⁹ What a contrast this was with the general responses of the two northern Courses already examined! Whereas they were determined to maintain their existence, SWMTC seems to have been content that only its best *qualities* should continue. Perhaps this was something to do with the inclusion of the Exeter Joint Director on the relevant ACCM committee. Whatever the reason, the impression is of a response of meek compliancy rather than robust opposition. Maybe the student numbers, then comprising only 18 (of whom a mere 12 were Anglican ordinands)²⁰ did not permit any fervent campaign

¹⁷ Notes from Residential Staff Meeting – January 1988, SWMTC Executive Minutes *Book*, SWMTC archives.

¹⁸ For instance a 'Draft Response to Inspectors Report', 1988, SWMTC Executive Minutes *Book*, SWMTC archives.

¹⁹ Executive Minutes, 23 June 1989, SWMTC Executive Minutes *Book*, SWMTC archives.

²⁰ Executive Minutes, 14 December 1989, SWMTC Executive Minutes *Book*, SWMTC archives.

for continuing autonomy at all costs! Discussions were not without some spiritedness, however, and at one stage the Bishop of Plymouth was really quite critical of the changes that ACCM were attempting to impose on the *dioceses* in their allocation of ordinands to Courses. He expressed his hope that the House of Bishops would accept "responsibility for determining the shape of structure needed [of the Courses] and ensuring that it is healthy" by 'taking on' ACCM and not just 'rubber stamping the [ACCM 30] Report.'²¹

In the general context of discussions about the future of SWMTC, prompted in response to ACCM 30, two further important points were made by Council members relating to the ethos of the training being made available by the Course. One was in connection with issues of churchmanship where, although one of the joint directors saw the job of SWMTC to encourage ordinands in whatever churchmanship they came from, there was a stronger feeling 'that in Colleges, a broad-Church tradition has disappeared, they were now either high or low-Church, whereas Courses enabled the broader tradition to survive'.²² The other was in connection with transfers from Non-Stipendiary to Stipendiary ministry. There had been a visit from the Chief Secretary of ACCM who welcomed this as a commonplace transition helpful as a means of recruitment of stipendiaries. Both Exeter and Truro Dioceses emphasised that the two forms of ministry were seen as distinctive, with transition between the two not straightforward. During the discussions, the joint Directors said clearly that the Course was 'primarily training for NSM'.²³ A letter from the Diocese of Truro's Training officer to ACCM shortly afterwards

²¹ Council Minutes, 27 April 1989, Minutes for Signature file, SWMTC archives.

²² Council Minutes, 22 November, 1989, Minutes for Signature file, SWMTC archives.

²³ Council Minutes, 22 November 1989, Minutes for Signature file, SWMTC archives.

served to underline this understanding.²⁴ This insight into the self-awareness of SWMTC as being primarily used to foster broad-Church NSM vocations could be seen as a simple reflection of majority usage. But it was at some variance with what the Church overall had, since 1979, expected.

The pattern of discussions concerning re-organisation of SWMTC, as recommended by ACCM 30 and the Lincoln Report was broadly similar to what has been described for CDTI and NEOC, namely acceptance of negotiations for working together with a neighbouring Course (in this case at Gloucester); rejection of a full amalgamation to form a new single Course covering the whole region and finally the abandonment of the process as the central authorities came to accept the importance of local issues such as the geographical and moved to recommendations towards local 'clustering' arrangements instead. So for some time in the early 1990's, proposals were tabled for forming a 'Regional Forum', to include the Gloucester Course, and also Wesley and Trinity Colleges at Bristol with the intention of developing a joint syllabus. The Lincoln Report did express the hope for the emergence of a single Regional Course by natural evolution from SWMTC and the Gloucester Course,²⁵ but a line was drawn under all these ideas when in 1994 the External Examiner for SWMTC recorded,

The attempt to make a course re-submission in association with WMTC [should be WEMTC] has now been abandoned, wisely in my view. As I remarked last year, the areas covered by the two courses stretched from Ludlow to Land's End; each course already had its own problems of geography, and the two together proved just too much.²⁶

²⁴ Letter to ACCM, undated but with other material dated April 1990, SWMTC Council Minute Secretary's papers, SWMTC archives.

²⁵ Council Minutes, 5 November 1992, Minutes for Signature file, SWMTC archives.

²⁶ Report of the External Examiner, 1994, SWMTC Executive, Principal's file, SWMTC archives.

The latter followed a changed instruction from ABM in February 1994 whereby SWMTC was effectively mandated to cease pursuing a relationship with WEMTC in favour of the exploration of 'clustering' with the College of St. Mark and St. John at Plymouth.²⁷

A Bishops' Inspection in 1992/93 was reported as having been critical both of structures and of individuals.²⁸ This seems to have prompted a quite wide-ranging internal reassessment of the life of the Course. It was accepted by the Course that there should be a single Principal, but not that any one post holder should be described as 'Director of Studies'.²⁹ A document on file headed 'Worship on the SWMTC' dated 1993³⁰ reveals the fact that the Inspectors were also 'highly critical' of the worship on the Course. An alarming picture of anarchy was described, with students engaging in a competitive culture producing "creative liturgies for every act of worship", refusing instructions of staff, and generally moving into a situation where there was inadequate attention to authorised liturgies. Not surprisingly, swift action was taken to rectify the general situation, but it seems at the very least on the basis of the evidence, that what was being learnt in worship was neither high/low, nor the 'broad church' already referred to, but individualistic, congregational or radical, according to one's point of view.

If being individualistic in the face of standard expectations is seen as undesirable, local initiative is much more of a recommendation. The mid 1990's saw discussions between the Russian Orthodox Church and SWMTC over their possible use of the Course for training for ordination. This was described at the time

²⁷ Letter dated 14 February 1994, SWMTC Executive Minutes Book, SWMTC archives.

²⁸ Note concerning the Inspectors' Report, August 1994, Executive file, SWMTC archives.

²⁹ Executive Minutes, 1 December 1994, Executive file, SWMTC archives.

³⁰ In SWMTC Principal's File, SWMTC archives.

as 'a pioneering initiative which, in its own right, is exciting and full of enormous potential. It may also pave the way for developments beyond the boundaries of the South West.'³¹ Earlier discussion had already taken place with the Roman Catholic Church concerning the possible use of SWMTC in connection with the training of their Permanent Deacons.³²

The long-awaited appointment of a single Principal to replace the previous two Joint Directors of SWMTC was both the outworking of the 1992 Bishops' Inspection and also the most significant change for the Course, structurally, in recent years. A new administrative centre was set up at North Petherwin, near Launceston, which was geographically mid-way between Exeter and Truro. There was a knock-on effect of changing roles within the core staff group as a result of this. The change seems to have resulted in the positive development of the Course all-round and, whereas the Bishops' Inspectors had previously been highly critical and their report had met with some hostility, in 1997 it was said, 'we were pleased with the attitude and conduct of the inspectors which led to the inspection being done in a spirit of dialogue and cooperation. We believe the report to be fair and constructive'.³³ The positive development of the Course was also reflected in increased student numbers, and the Principal's Report for 1999/2000 made the following declaration:

In 1999/2000 there were 43 students – 31 full fee paying ordination candidates from the Church of England and the Methodist Church, 6 Foundation students and 6 OLM candidates. This year [2000] there are 49 students...

³¹ Paper entitled, 'Draft Proposals concerning the relationship between the SWMTC and the Russian Orthodox Church in the South West', 25 January 1995, SWMTC Exec Principal's File, SWMTC archives.

³² Council Minutes, 7 November 1991, Minutes for Signature file, SWMTC archives.

³³ The Report of the Principal to Council, November 1998, Principal's Reports file, SWMTC archives.

The above perhaps constitutes an appropriate positive note on which to end this brief description of one of the Regional Courses which has been characterised from the beginning by difficult geography and demography, but also strong local university links which have related not only to validation but to the heart of the teaching programme.

Chapter 8: Development of Individual Courses 1979-2000 – London and the South East

I Southwark Ordination Course (SOC) Canterbury School of Ministry (CSM) South-East Institute for Theological Education (SEITE)

In contrast with those Courses which argued to remain substantially unchanged in the face of ACCM 30 and the Lincoln Report and succeeded, the Southwark Ordination Course and the Canterbury School of Ministry were both replaced by a single new Course, the South-East Institute for Theological Education, under the same process. They were not alone in this, and reference will be made later to the Oxford, St. Albans and Oak Hill Courses. But it seems from the discussions held that the change from SOC and CSM to SEITE was the most difficult one, and prompted the most upheaval among the personnel concerned. One person who had seen the transition from both sides witnessed to there having been lots of bad feeling in connection with staff redundancies.¹ It was thought that the need to make a new start was a prompt, along with impending Data Protection Act requirements, for the wholesale destruction of all archive records for both SOC and CSM during the year 2001, including purely historical material in addition to personal records. This means that it is impossible from local archives to build up a picture of what was happening at SOC and CSM during the 1980's and early 1990's.

¹ Conversations on 2 July 2001 (notes held).

Records do exist concerning the process of transition from SOC and CSM to SEITE, but it seems that by then the future had been decided on, or at least seen as inevitable locally. On 21 March 1992 the Canterbury Diocesan Synod² passed the resolution:

That this Synod:

- i) supports the proposals to set up an Ordination Course serving the dioceses of Canterbury, Rochester and Southwark as outlined in Appendix F2 to the Agenda.
- ii) approves the setting up of the Shadow Course Council.
- iii) recommends strongly to the Shadow Course Council that the present Principals of the Canterbury School of Ministry and the Southwark Ordination Course should jointly be invited to head the new Course for at least the first two years of its life to ensure continuity for the students.

The Appendix F2³ mentioned above constituted a report to Synod which included an historical synopsis, four sections of which are here reproduced as providing a succinct account of the process of change, from the point of view of the Canterbury School of Ministry:

1. The Canterbury School of Ministry was founded by Archbishop Coggan in 1977, with Canon Kenneth Mason as the first Principal. The School was established to take responsibility for aspects of non-residential training and theological education formerly provided at St. Augustine's College. CSM provides a course of pastoral and theological education for students sponsored by the Anglican, Methodist and United Reformed Churches. The course serves as a preparation for the ordained ministries, and for accredited lay ministry. It receives candidates for the stipendiary and non-stipendiary ministries. Students have come from all parts of Kent, and the great majority remain within Kent following ordination or accreditation. Since 1977, 75 men and women have completed the course and are now serving the Church in a variety of ministries.

While CSM receives in training eligible Anglican candidates from both Canterbury and Rochester dioceses, for practical reasons (e.g. location of work) some Rochester ordinands are sent to train with SOC, and also some are sent to Oak Hill. CSM has found itself vulnerable to fluctuations in the number of candidates being recommended for training. In common with the other smaller ordination courses, the long-

² Minutes in Transition File I, SEITE archives.

³ Also in Transition File I, SEITE archives.

term educational and financial viability of the CSM Course has been threatened by these fluctuations.

7. The publication of ACCM Paper no. 30 and subsequent developments were received with concern at CSM, as it was clear that the course had little chance of meeting the following criteria for continued validation: an intake of a minimum of 8 ordinands per year, a sponsorship by more than one diocese, and the relinquishing of 'hidden subsidies'. In response to ACCM Paper No. 30, CSM and the Diocese of Canterbury have been determined to negotiate the best possible arrangements for part-time ordination training to cover the S.E. region, and to ensure that the needs of areas such as the Isle of Thanet and Romney Marsh are taken into consideration.

10. The Task Group was duly established, and at its second meeting in June 1991 it recommended to the Governing Bodies of SOC and CSM that a single institution should be formed to serve the dioceses and sponsoring denominations in the South East of England, and that this institution should be operative from 1st September 1994.

Much of the documentation which survives from the period of transition consists of the particular administrative and financial discussion necessary in the moving from two separate organisations to a third, new, one. Although many people at the time were speculating that ACCM were recommending changes in the Regional Course pattern for financial reasons, it seemed that in the transformation to SEITE there would be a fixed set-up cost, in addition to increased on-going fees *per capita*. One document includes the words, 'ABM are being extraordinarily slow about all this. I am concerned that they will express horrified innocence when they see the costs we are putting to them.'⁴ It seems that whilst the Southwark Course had been based on more or less real costs of the operation, the Canterbury Course had had many hidden costs by way of Diocesan subsidy and these had now to be declared.⁵ The cost of possible redundancies was also considered.⁶ There seems to

⁴ Letter dated 2 April 1993, Transition File I, SEITE archives.

⁵ Letter dated 2 June, 1993, Transition File I, SEITE archives.

⁶ Letter dated 11 June, 1993, Transition File I, SEITE archives.

have been a dispute with ABM over costs with ABM demanding both the removal of diocesan subsidies and a new fee no higher than either of the old ones – a seeming logical impossibility. Procrastination was threatening necessary legal decisions relating to Canterbury and Southwark, and ABM was informed, ‘Stated baldly, neither of these two events will be able to happen, and the Institute will not come into existence nor be able to commence teaching next September, unless by the beginning of November we are assured of financial support by ABM for the three years 1994/7.’⁷ One can only wonder whether behind the scenes ABM might have been having worries about where it was going in the South East, especially in the light of policy reversals then in progress (already noted) for the North East, North West and South West. Transition arrangements were close to crisis, and the thought that ABM might be about to call a halt to the developments was raised.⁸ It is not surprising that after considerable effort in planning for the new institution involving many arrangements, academic, financial and legal, considerable frustration was being felt. To the external observer the impression is of ACCM/ABM fighting against those in the regions whatever was proposed, i.e. fighting against the Northern East and Carlisle Courses for wanting to maintain the status quo, and fighting against the Dioceses of Southwark, Rochester and Canterbury for wanting to implement change!

Whilst the above wrangles were in progress, a Shadow Board of Studies was drawing up a syllabus for the new Institute, based upon delivery of classes at Canterbury, Rochester and London. Initially it was hoped to obtain academic validation both from the University of London and the University of Kent at

⁷ Letter dated 22 September, 1993, Transition File I, SEITE archives.

⁸ Letter dated 22 September, 1993, Transition File I, SEITE archives.

Canterbury. But it seems that while the latter was very enthusiastic about this, the former, in the shape of Birkbeck College, was less so. This resulted in the decision to concentrate on collaboration with the University of Kent at Canterbury, and by the end of 1993 it was planned to offer a University Diploma in Theology for ordination candidates with the option of a Certificate in Theology for others who might be admitted to attend the evening classes but not the residential parts of the programme.⁹ Validation through Christ Church College, Canterbury was also seriously investigated, but eventually the direct collaborative link with the University of Kent was chosen as the preferred option. Alongside the bulk of academic planning in the relevant file is a single reference to the academic staff who would need to seek other employment as a result of the changes which were in hand.

The new full Council of SEITE met for the first time on 1 December 1993, replacing the preparatory Shadow Council. The first new item of business was about the stark correspondence sent to ABM a few weeks before concerning transitional finance. It was reported that, 'A "letter of comfort" to the chairman from the Bishop of Dunwich, was tabled. This agreed financial backing for one year as an earnest of ABM's goodwill for the future. The letter had satisfied the SOC Council and CSM'.¹⁰ Six months later, the third member of the core staff was appointed and in an instance of awareness of the issues of churchmanship, it was reported that the successful applicant was 'an Evangelical, who would offer balance to the existing team'.¹¹

⁹ Letters dated 22.12.93., Transition File II, SEITE archives.

¹⁰ Minutes, 1 December 1993, SEITE Council Minutes file, SEITE archives.

¹¹ Minutes, 26 May 1994, SEITE Council Minutes file, SEITE archives.

SEITE was launched officially as planned at the beginning of the academic year 1994-95. It was reported that there was an intake of 23 first-year students.¹² A wide diversity in the make-up of the overall ordinand body was also noted, there being fourteen Stipendiary Ordinands at Blackfriars (London) and only one at Canterbury. Reader candidates were also being included, under the Certificate arrangements noted, and the Bishop of Maidstone commented that Canterbury Reader trainees were delighted with the Course.¹³ Council minutes are fairly brief in style but one clear milestone recorded in November 1995¹⁴ was the resignation of both joint Principals as from 1 March 1996 and the appointment of a new Principal as from 1 July. There is no record as to whether either of the former had applied for the new post. The final Principals' Report¹⁵ prompted the following disagreement between the retiring senior personnel:

Para 6. "I was never convinced that the administrative centre should be at Rochester, although I well understood the emotional arguments that made that necessary. I do not consider that either the present teaching spaces or the office accommodation there are entirely satisfactory. I think that may have been the main mistake we have made."

Bishop Brian commented that perhaps too many of the leading roles in the Institute had gathered around Rochester, which could be a result of the decision to fix the administrative centre there leading to other consequences which were not necessarily appropriate in the longer term. He referred to the residence of the Principal in Rochester, and the Chairman of the Council and of the Board of Studies both being from the Rochester diocese. There could be a need at this stage for recognition that the identity of the London centre of the Institute needs to be promoted.

The Revd Alan Amos commented that he could not be expected to agree with his colleague the Co-Principal, on the matter of the Administrative Centre. He felt the decision had been taken on grounds which were necessary for the establishment of a new Institute in the South East.

¹² Minutes, 22 November 1994, SEITE Council Minutes file, SEITE archives.

¹³ Minutes, 16 February 1995, SEITE Council Minutes file, SEITE archives.

¹⁴ Minutes, 30 November 1995, SEITE Council Minutes file, SEITE archives.

¹⁵ Minutes, 6 March 1996, SEITE Council Minutes file, SEITE archives.

The first Bishops' Inspection of the new SEITE took place during 1997. The text is not available, but the theme of conflict between the local and ABM seems to have been fuelled by receipt of the Inspection Report and Council debated not only fifteen recommendations of the Report, but also the then present Inspection process and the conduct of individual inspectors!¹⁶ One may glean from the minutes¹⁷ that one of the Inspectors' recommendations was a reduction in teaching centres from three to two. One can perhaps understand the reluctance to do this, which would have caused the Course to change in outward appearance back to that of SOC and CSM, at the risk of prompting the question, 'Why then the need for change?'

Although in general the Council did not see as its role to intervene in student matters which might be resolved under the jurisdiction of the Principal,¹⁸ there was one policy issue which was discussed under the heading 'Partners and Spouses' in March 1999.¹⁹ (It is obvious from the preceding meeting's minutes²⁰ that the partners referred to were homosexuals). 'The Principal noted that a pragmatic policy of including partners on weekends arranged for spouses had been inherited by SEITE, but that this had not been brought to Council for a decision. In the light of the Lambeth Resolution and the House of Bishops' Guidelines on Issues in Human Sexuality, the Management Committee recommended that future arrangements should refer to spouses only, but that individual cases should be approached with pastoral sensitivity.' It seems that not only was SEITE training

¹⁶ Minutes, 17 December 1997, SEITE Council Minutes file, SEITE archives.

¹⁷ of 5 March 1998.

¹⁸ See for example Minutes of 22 November 1994, SEITE Council Minutes file, SEITE archives, on the subject of the 'Toronto Blessing.'

¹⁹ Minutes, 11 March 1999, SEITE Council Minutes file, SEITE archives.

²⁰ That of 14 October 1998, SEITE Council Minutes file, SEITE archives.

candidates who had been recommended whilst being practising homosexuals, but that such candidates were being permitted to flaunt their behaviour, that there was somewhat more than a single case at issue and that it was a long-standing problem.

From the sequence of Principal's Reports available a number of routine issues may be identified which help to give some further shape to the history of SEITE. In 1997 an additional programme for students of 'Advanced Standing' was included in the curricula available.²¹ The following year the very personal comment was offered,²² that

there is a real sense in which it feels as if the Institute is beginning to enter a new phase of growing stabilities and confidence. This is reflected at many levels, but most immediately, perhaps, in terms, of staff morale.

We are aware that there are still many difficult problems and decisions to be faced. Nevertheless, there is perhaps a feeling that we may be beginning to turn a corner. The problems and concerns being raised are still pressing, but they are more like the 'normal' problems which might be expected...

Whilst not giving details of individual problems, this is significant evidence for the turmoil surrounding the setting up of SEITE, which has already been referred to.

An idea of the size of SEITE, relative to the other Courses already covered, can be gained from the Principal's Report of September 1998, which cites a student body of 75 ordinands and 65 associates, a number very much larger. Again in 1999,²³ it was reported that 'the Institute appears to be developing a growing sense of stability... confidence levels seem to be increasing, both within the staff team and within the student body.' That year marked a move of headquarters to Chatham, thereby easing pressure on office and library space. There was also by this time a

²¹ Principal's Report, 7 May 1997, Principal's Reports file, SEITE archives.

²² Principal's Report, 6 May 1998, Principal's Reports file, SEITE archives.

²³ Principal's Report, 3 February 1999, Principal's Reports file, SEITE archives.

fourth full-time member of academic staff in post. An appropriate final point to note is the continued increase in student numbers and the following is the analysis given in the year 2000:²⁴

Table 8/1: SEITE Students, 2000

	<u>Canterbury</u>		<u>Chatham</u>		<u>Southwark</u>		<u>Total</u>
Ordinands	19	(05/09/05)	16	(06/03/07)	50	(20/10/20)	85 (31/22/32)
Associates	25	(10/07/08)	20	(13/03/04)	11	(00/03/08)	56 (23/13/20)
Auditors	05	(03/02/00)	04	(01/01/02)	03	(01/02/00)	12 (05/05/02)
E. Class:	49	(18/18/13)	40	(20/07/13)	64	(21/15/28)	153 (59/40/54)
AS Ordinands	-		-		09	(03/03/03)	09 (03/03/03)
Total							162 (62/43/57)

Figures in brackets show numbers of students by year group

In the Church of England individual title ‘The structure and funding of ordination training’, published in 2002, SEITE was identified as the largest of the Regional Courses on the basis of the above figure of 85 ordinands. It has as many students as three of the smallest Courses put together. It came into being through a difficult transition from its antecedents, the Southwark and Canterbury Courses, at the behest of ACCM which, as ABM when SEITE started up, had already changed its policy to give pre-eminence to local clustering between theological institutions as a preferred alternative to amalgamations between just the Courses. It is ironic that the demise of SOC involved a ‘declustering’ from the University of London. The historian with the benefit of hindsight must ask why the same provision for ordinands could not have been obtained by keeping SOC and encouraging CSM to cover the Rochester diocese more fully. SOC never was in practice a single-diocese Course, having always been bought-into by those from surrounding dioceses for whom its premises formed a convenient place for attendance. This comment is not intended in any way to berate the excellent and dedicated commitment and success of SEITE staff. But it is intended to point out the possibilities for considerable

²⁴ Principal’s Report, 12 February 2000, Principal’s Reports file, SEITE archives.

efforts of dubious necessity which can be occasioned by central policy decisions which are easier to change than the effects of their shock waves.

II St. Albans and Oxford Ministry Course (SAOMC)
St. Albans Diocese Ministerial Training Scheme (SAMTS)
Oxford Ministry Course (OMC)

(the latter formerly Oxford Diocesan Training Course from the Auxiliary Pastoral Ministry and Oxford Diocesan NSM Scheme)

This group of Courses is united once again by actions and change deemed necessary by ACCM 30 and the Lincoln Report. The offices of the St. Albans and Oxford Ministry Course today are to be found at Diocesan House, Oxford, where are kept the Course records and also a full set of archives relating to the Oxford Ministry Course which itself represented a renaming and reshaping of what was founded as the Oxford Diocesan Training Course for the Auxiliary Pastoral Ministry and subsequently became the Oxford Diocesan NSM scheme. What is less obvious today is that SAOMC was founded to replace two previous Courses of differing ethos, the other being the St. Albans Diocese Ministerial Training Scheme – abbreviated here as SAMTS but known within the St. Albans Diocese simply as ‘MTS.’

In what follows a picture will first be given of SAMTS from such documentation as survives. This will be followed by the contrasting story of OMC and finally how SAOMC attempted to combine the best features of both.

The unique underlying ethos of SAMTS is completely illustrated by the following extract from a prospectus of about 1991-92:

Vocation

The purpose of the Ministerial Training Scheme is to supply appropriately trained ministers to meet the Church's future needs.

During the course this purpose is constantly held alongside the desire of individual students to find an appropriate context, form and function for the ministry which they hope to offer after the course. This means that on the course, and in the Church as a whole, attention is given to the process of discerning what vocation is appropriate for each individual student. This task is addressed:

- (a) in the personal profile and other tutorials;
- (b) in the Local Panel, and
- (c) in the course group as a whole.

Students are expected to work at clarifying their own personal perception of vocation, relating this to the perception of the local Christian community, and testing this perception of vocation with a national Selection Conference, if appropriate. Finally, with the Church's help, students are assisted in identifying a suitable location for their future ministry.

At their inception many of the Regional Courses were somewhat flexible about students being admitted before formal recommendation for ordination training. But all other than the St. Albans MTS eventually developed their policy so that it became normal for candidates to have to have been recommended before being offered a place. SAMTS students were admitted, uniquely, to train for ministry in the widest sense, and to discern the specifics of their calling whilst in preparation. Most of the other Courses came to welcome routinely a certain proportion of students who were not ordination candidates, but who wished to benefit from the general theological education and training available. Typically this would involve attendance at midweek lectures and groups but not at those residential elements aimed specifically at preparation for ordained ministry. Again this was not the case at SAMTS. All students took part in all elements of the course. The Course was approved at the time by ACCM/ABM for ordination training, but many, indeed the majority of students, undertook the whole Course without presenting themselves for selection for ordination. This was not seen as failure, because genuinely the ordained ministry was seen as but one of a number of possible ministries to which students might be called.

The collection of papers and comments from people associated with SAMTS, printed under the title, 'Growing in Ministry', in September 1986 to mark the scheme's tenth anniversary, is now the main written source covering the early days. In it the first Director of Auxiliary Ministry Training for the St Albans diocese describes the ethos undergirding the founding of SAMTS¹ as worked out between himself and the then Bishop of St. Albans, the Rt. Rev Robert Runcie. The scheme was conceived of as being, 'something wider than a scheme for training NSM's ... we proposed a scheme which would train men and women together and believed that during training a variety of vocations would emerge, both lay and ordained.' The theology undergirding this practical plan was very simply that every member of the church was called to share in its priestly and ministering work.² So it could be said that there was a sense in which all the training offered by the then conceptional SAMTS was to be for 'priestly' ministry, but much of that was not envisaged to be exercised as the traditional ordained 'priesthood' of the Church; rather, 'I envisaged new expressions of ordained ministry as pointing forwards to a new style of being the church, the precise nature of which we cannot as yet fully predict... I also wrote, "The most desirable form for a diocesan scheme would be that of a lay Training Course, in which laymen and lay women, potential readers and ordinands all shared"''.³ 'Growing into Ministry' makes it clear that this idea was tabled in the setting of the mid-1970's panic about rapidly declining numbers of ordinands to the traditional Stipendiary Ministry and co-terminus rapidly increasing inflation.⁴

¹ Alan Wilkinson writing in the SAMTS booklet, 'Growing into Ministry', p.5, St. Albans archives.

² 'Growing into Ministry', p.5, St. Albans archives.

³ 'Growing into Ministry', p.5, St. Albans archives.

⁴ 'Growing into Ministry', p.4, St. Albans archives.

The pioneering understanding of ministry on the part of SAMTS as being a corporate venture is strongly emphasised in 'Growing into Ministry'. Another writer in the anthology⁵ describes the clear notion of the need to develop 'a diversity of ministries using people's gifts and abilities, but at the same time stressing their complementarities within the whole body'. Another distinctive emphasis was to be found in the approach to the whole enterprise of theology, which was described as needing to be practical.⁶ Strong argument was made for the practice of theology to be understood not as a collection of closely related disciplines or subject areas including the academic and practical, but as a 'dynamic model of continuing dialogue between experience and tradition'. It was thought that given this approach, SAMTS had a vital role in making theology more accessible to the whole body of the Church.

In hindsight this pioneering strength of the scheme may well have also been its weakness. It could be said that the aims of what was undertaken were just too wide to be sustainable within one modestly-sized training organisation serving a single diocese. Typical student numbers for SAMTS during its period of existence were around fifty, spread over three academic year groups. This would constitute an average size in subsequent experience for a Regional Course delivering specialist training for ordinands. But compared with subsequent initiatives in other dioceses for the whole breadth of lay training designed to encourage participation in a variety of ministries, it was a very small number indeed. There may well have been other weaknesses built into the structure of the new venture, perhaps unwittingly, in an effort to provide the broad and practical approach desired. For instance one person

⁵ Bob Langley, in 'Growing into Ministry', p.53, St. Albans archives.

⁶ 'Growing into Ministry', p.60, St. Albans archives.

invited in 1985 to tutor a substantial project element of the final year curriculum wrote the following self-assessment:⁷

In my time I think I have held just about every conceivable attitude – unexamined belief, doubt, rejection, anger and hostility, tolerance to a present openness to and acceptance of the spiritual, as yet unable or unwilling to subscribe to any systematic belief system.

Projects formed a very important and indeed principal element in an approach to teaching which strove for integration between disciplines. It seems at the least rather odd to find that in an environment where students were being encouraged continually to ‘do’ theology, they should be provided with tutorship which could accept none!

In the 1981-82 academic year, some five years after the founding of SAMTS, the total number of ordinands and women deaconess/lay candidates in training was sixteen, alongside 43 others whose ministries were yet to be discerned. In the Bishops’ Inspection report for 1981, there was general commendation of just about all that was happening on the scheme, especially the training of ordinands alongside lay people. By 1986 (the date of the self-congratulatory document ‘Growing into Ministry’, already referred to), the number of ‘other’ students had grown to 48 and there were also three non-Anglicans. But the numbers of candidates for ordination and accredited women’s ministry had fallen to seven, divided between the three academic years. There followed a dramatic shift in the tone of the Bishops’ Inspectors. They found in 1986 a generally declining quality of student. They also found the staff’s discharge of responsibility towards ordinands as verging on the inadequate, with no distinctive training for them. Academic rigour

⁷ ‘Growing into Ministry’, p.30, St. Albans archives.

was criticised; worship was described as dismaying and the governing body was recommended to consider transferring its accredited ordinands to other Courses.

Among the practical weaknesses concerning SAMTS which are in the public domain, the issue of personal problems and course disruption, when a person went to a selection conference and was not recommended for training, has also been acknowledged.⁸ When it came to the recommendations of ACCM 30 and the subsequent Lincoln Report, perhaps it was the awareness of some of the problems asserted above which caused there to be a readiness on the part of the relevant personnel to cooperate with the processes of change and development then being recommended.

In spite of certain weaknesses, the shape of SAMTS in its developed form had the appearance of both positive inclusiveness and rigour. The prospectus from c.1991-2 indicates that the scheme was recognised by both the Methodist and United Reformed Churches for the training of its ministers and that members of other Churches had at times been members of the student body. Organisation was on the basis of three separate 'courses' beginning in each third year in Bedfordshire, East or West Hertfordshire respectively. Each 'course' had its own Director, under the overall leadership of the SAMTS Principal. As well as the elements of annual summer school, and five residential weekends each year (a general pattern held in common with all the Regional Courses), attendance at the 'course' centre for two evenings each week over thirty weeks of the year was mandatory. Thus contact time between teaching staff and students was higher than average, although this does not seem to have ameliorated significantly the weaknesses already described.

⁸ Interview both with the final Chairman of SAMTS and with a former student, 5 July 2001.

Reference to correspondence between SAMTS and ACCM during the final years of the scheme's existence⁹ indicates that there was some reluctance in authorising the approval of the final curriculum submission which was made in 1989 under the ACCM 22 procedures. The general caveat seems to have been the principle of whether or not there was provision of the 'appropriate structural and educational requirements for the ordination candidates',¹⁰ due to doubts about the propriety of 'linking together of a course of training for ministry with a course exploring the nature of vocation that the Church perceives in individuals'. In the medium term it was clear that the Church did not agree that such linking together was proper. A clear case can be made for this in terms of greatly differing educational needs. But a paper written by SAMTS in clarification of their position¹¹ may identify a hidden strength in their approach which impacts on a 'given' of the present day Regional Courses. In the paper, SAMTS says of itself:

It is not open to people who wish to attend lectures as an adult educational exercise. The course is a selected group of people who are seeking to discern more clearly, in the context of training, a ministry within the Church of God.

It is a general understanding today that each course may be attended by a certain proportion of exactly those who were excluded from SAMTS. The assertion has already been made that that in itself can detract from the endeavour of training people for ministry. At the time, however, it seems that ACCM were more trying to do away with SAMTS than learn from it. Concern was expressed at the Council

⁹ ACCM 22 file, St. Albans archives.

¹⁰ Letter of 25 May 1989, ACCM 22 file, St. Albans archives.

¹¹ 'The Discernment of Vocation', ref MTS/C/89.4/4, ACCM 22 file, St. Albans archives.

over this relationship with ACCM and the question raised as to whether there was anything which could be done to improve the general situation.¹²

Whilst confidence and enthusiasm for the work of SAMTS remained high among those directly involved, it is hard, in looking through the files for the final five years to find evidence to counter the weaknesses. In 1990 the External Examiner wrote a critical report which included comments such as students ‘groping in the dark after Theology’, lack of clarity about major issues such as the place of the Old Testament in the Christian Church, and lack of clarity in student perception about the relationship of different areas of the syllabus to each other – the last in spite of the integrated ‘project’ approach which had always formed part of the scheme’s *modus operandi*.¹³ A St. Albans Diocesan document entitled ‘Re-organisation of the MTS and diocesan needs and policy’, of May 1991¹⁴ gave the rather surprising information that although SAMTS was in receipt of the huge annual subsidy of £60,000-£70,000 per annum, only a minority of its ordinands, even for Non Stipendiary ministry, actually used it for training: ‘there are at present five ordinands on MTS, seven at Oak Hill and a significant number in full-time training in colleges’. It is hard to see the Diocesan basis for arguing for the good-practice and popularity of its home-sponsored training when most of its ordinands actually chose to train elsewhere, still harder to see how any attempt to argue for the effectiveness of any scheme which combined the training of ordinands with the discernment of vocation could be sustained.

¹² Council Minutes, 14 February 1990, MTS Minutes file, St. Albans archives.

¹³ St. Albans MTS External Examiners Report 1990, ref. MTS. D.91.1.2., MTS Minutes file, St. Albans archives.

¹⁴ Held in MTS Minutes file, St. Albans archives.

In common with other Regional Courses, ACCM 30 and the Lincoln Report together required a very great deal of time spent by staff and Council members in discussing possible plans for the future. In the case of SAMTS, such negotiations were principally with the Oxford Ministry Course and the Oak Hill Ministerial Training Course, and it became obvious that a merger with the former might be possible.¹⁵ Although the possibility was raised of St. Albans Diocese continuing its own ministerial training without ACCM accreditation, this was seen as impractical.¹⁶ Merger with OMC was therefore pursued. It is unlikely that the 1991 Bishops' Inspection did anything other than reinforce the desirability of this course of action.

The progress of the merger will be referred to later in this section. SAMTS ceased to be an independently functioning educational entity in the summer of 1994. It was a unique venture and pioneering in nature. But perhaps one of the very things which it pioneered, the serious training of the laity for a variety of ministries, was one main cause of its downfall, as in the Church at large the need for such training was taken up on a much wider basis, but separate from the training of those whom it was discerned had the special vocation to ordination.

The history of the Oxford Course from 1980 is very much one of building on the institutional foundations soundly established during the preceding decade (see Chapter 2). The St. Albans Course was proceeding on the basis of an experimental approach as has been demonstrated, and the Oxford Course was the opposite. Consciousness of 'the academic' (in contrast to 'the practical') can be traced at this time through two very different issues. In the first place there is a copy

¹⁵ E.g. Council Minutes, 19 June 1991, MTS Minutes file, St. Albans archives.

¹⁶ Paper entitled 'Future Staffing', ref. MTS/F&G.P./89/3/1, MTS Minutes file, St. Albans archives.

letter on file¹⁷ from January 1980 from a member of the Supervisory Board expressing the Board's alarm at the numbers then transferring from Non-Stipendiary to full-time stipendiary ministry without further-training (and therefore in reversal of previous diocesan practice). Secondly, correspondence from December 1984¹⁸ concerning Inspection indicated that the member of staff then responsible for Pastoral Studies was 'struggling hard to inject into the Course a formal Pastoral Studies component' whilst being 'awed by the magnitude of the Pastoral Studies syllabus' being offered elsewhere in part-time training, seemingly by the SDMTS. At the time, for instance, there was not even any requirement for any pastoral experience outside a students' home parish.¹⁹ Both these issues were, however, being discussed out of a sense of realism about the lot of the part-time student, and one (lay) part-time tutor wrote, 'I have to say that I am prepared to give the benefit of the doubt to anyone who manages to travel all the way to Oxford each week, and to write any essays at all after doing a week's work.'²⁰

The Oxford archives do not reveal any distinctive issues for the rest of the 1980's, and the re-organisation prompted by ACCM 30 and the Lincoln Report appears to be the major issue faced during the lifetime of the Course. Response to these documents appears to have been different when comparing Oxford and St. Albans perspectives. Whilst in the case of St. Albans the reorganisation coincided with a need for change in the light of critical appraisal of that Course as an

¹⁷ Author not traceable, but held in NSM Course Supervisory Board file, SAOMC archives for OMC.

¹⁸ Letter of 18 December, 1984, from John Broughall, NSM Course Supervisory Board file, SAOMC archives for OMC.

¹⁹ 'Summary of Inspectors' Report on Oxford Non-Stipendiary Ministry Course', August 1983, NSM Course Memoranda and Reports file, SAOMC archives for OMC.

²⁰ Letter dated 22 February 1991, Course Development – ACCM 22 file, SAOMC archives for OMC.

individual entity, there seems to have been a mood of significant loss within the Oxford organisation amounting almost to despondency. The words 'gloom' and 'crisis' figure in the Principal's report of 24 November 1993,²¹ although the Course members were said to be in good heart. This was as OMC faced the final months of its independent existence.

At the beginning of 1991 the Principal, with the Bishop of Dorchester,²² had hoped to ensure the continuing autonomy of the Oxford Course by adapting the curriculum to answer the demands of ACCM 22 and by expanding the Course to include United Reformed Church candidates. The development of joint work with the St. Albans MTS was contemplated only as a fall-back position, and even then only in terms of 'a loose confederation'. The developments planned were also marked by a change of name from 'Oxford NSM Course' to 'Oxford Ministry Course' in what seems from the outside to represent a late recognition of the 1979 validation of all Courses for training for the full-time stipendiary ministry.²³ In fact the diocesan authorities seem to have continued to regard OMC as for Non-Stipendiaries only.²⁴

One of the issues which was highlighted in the time of transition was that of the division of the Non-Stipendiary ministry known as 'Minister in Secular Employment' (MSE) and the consciousness was described of a 'raison d'être' for

²¹ OMC Governing Body file, SAOMC archives for OMC.

²² Notes dated 20.2.91, ACCM file, SAOMC archives for OMC.

²³ Transition document, p.2, SAOMC archives for OMC.

²⁴ Transition document, p.6, SAOMC archives for OMC.

ministry arising in the place of employment and in the community as well as in the Church.²⁵

The Oxford archives indicate the progress of plans in the light of the Lincoln report. The story is contained in three 'Position Papers' published during 1992, which can be read against the background of Principal's reports and Governing Body minutes. In short, the month after a loose confederation with St. Albans had been established as a fall-back position, the Principal of the Oxford course together with members of the Governing Body met with representatives of the Bishop of Lincoln's Working Party. Also present were Principals and Governing Body members from the Oak Hill Ministerial Training Course and the St. Albans Ministerial Training Scheme. The objective of the Working Party members was to get the three Courses to combine to form one Regional Course covering the four dioceses of London, Chelmsford, St. Albans and Oxford. The Principals immediately referred to the relevant diocesan Bishops, and a Forum was setup involving diocesan as well as Course representatives. By the end of January 1992 a consensus was emerging that the resolution of both local and national concerns could only be met by promoting a 'Colloquium' for the area which would both represent and unite two new Regional Courses, one based on the then present Oak Hill course and serving London and Chelmsford dioceses, and the other based on a union of the OMC and SAMTS and serving the Oxford and St. Albans Dioceses together.²⁶ Within a year or so there had been retreat behind the proposed fall back position in the name of a consolidated defence against Lincoln regionally, but which virtually guaranteed the disappearance of the autonomy of the Oxford course.

²⁵ Transition document, p.11, SAOMC archives for OMC.

²⁶ Position Paper, January 1992, pp.1-2, SAOMC archives for OMC.

Perhaps this was inevitable as the one principle of ACCM 30/ Lincoln, which in hindsight was universally implemented, was the principle that no Course of part-time training should serve just one diocese. The new plan as outlined seems to have been promoted with some enthusiasm in spite of the original intention to avoid such union almost at all costs and 'Position Paper 2' of September 1992 shows that organisation of the new Course for Oxford and St. Albans was under way, in advance of ABM approval.²⁷

From papers in the Oxford files, an interesting insight can be gained into the relative strengths of the Oxford and St Albans Courses. It was said that at the beginning of the academic year 1992/3, the Oxford Course had 45 students, of whom 35 were Anglican ordinands. St. Albans had a higher total of 49 students, but of these a mere three were then ordination candidates.²⁸ Surprisingly in internal correspondence,²⁹ it was revealed that whereas the Oxford Diocese was usually at that stage training its non-stipendiary ordinands on its own Course, in the St. Albans Diocese a three-way division was being made between St. Albans M.T.S., and the Oak Hill and East Anglian Courses. That the Bishop of St. Albans was willing to commit all his relevant ordinands to the new Course as a part of a commitment to ensuring its viability, may also reflect seriously on the attitude to SAMTS by its own Diocese! In an information paper supplied by SAMTS to OMC, the former

²⁷ Position paper 2, September 1992, p.3, SAOMC archives for OMC.

²⁸ Position Paper 2, September 1992, p.3, SAOMC archives for OMC.

²⁹ Memorandum from the Principal to members of the Governing Body, dated 8 February 1993, OMC Governing Body file, SAOMC archives for OMC.

declared itself as looking forward to benefiting from the strong academic tradition of the Oxford Course.³⁰

If papers in the Oxford files give extra information about their prospective partners in St. Albans, the reverse is also true. Notes of the St. Albans Council³¹ indicate that the relative strength of the Oxford Course had obviously caused talk of Oxford 'going it alone', in spite of the 'Position Papers' and Colloquium arrangement. This was on the basis of perceived increased co-operation with the Oxford theological colleges on the part of OMC, together with the apparent knowledge that should the House of Bishops express reservations about the proposed merger, the Governing Body of OMC were said to be only too willing to abandon it. Fond dreams of continuing independence were obviously still being cherished!

In spite of an experience of preparing for the closure of OMC as being one of 'bemoaning our lost independence',³² during the closing months of the Course the Principal was able to report that the OMC staff, together with those at St. Albans, were now 'looking forward with some excitement to creating a new Course, in a new Church environment in which the total resources of our two Dioceses may be combined to offer an appropriate training for resourcing the Church's mission to the world in this area over the next decade'. It is to that new Course, the St. Albans and Oxford Ministry Training Course, that we must now turn.

³⁰ 'Oxford Ministry Course Governing Body' – a paper from SAMTS dated October 1992, page 1, OMC Governing Body file, St. Albans archives.

³¹ 'Notes of an extraordinary meeting of the Council of St. Albans Diocese Ministerial Training Scheme held on Wednesday 16 December 1992', MTS Minutes(1988-92) file, St. Albans archives.

³² Principal's Report, 24 November 1993, OMC Governors Minutes file, SAOMC archives for OMC.

The formal origins of the St. Albans and Oxford Ministry Course (SAOMC) can be traced to the beginning of 1993 when the Shadow Governing Body held its first meeting. Immediately before this there was an assurance passed between the respective chairmen of OMC and SAMTS about the former's commitment to the process in the light of the reservations which have already been discussed. The principal issue stressed in the first meeting was a long list of hopes and fears of all concerned.³³ In addition to assurances from the OMC Chairman, the meeting had also received a commitment of co-operation from the OMC Principal via a 'faxed' message, which also contained the news that OPTET – the partnership between Wycliffe Hall, St. Stephen's House, Ripon College Cuddesdon and the Oxford Course – welcomed the possibility of including the new combined Course in its partnership.³⁴ Following certain behind-the-scenes discussions, the May meeting appointed the existing Principal of OMC as Principal of the new SAOMC and the Principal of SAMTS as 'Associate Principal'. There was general concern that to have two joint Principals would detract from communications concerning the set up of SAOMC, but to retain both existing Principals as part of the staff team would greatly ease the fairly rapid transition required.³⁵

The estimated student body for the new Course was at this time 54, comprising 37 ordinands and seventeen other students.³⁶ Issues to be tackled in order to effect transition from OMC and SAMTS were wide-ranging including, by way of example, provision for the change of selection arrangements for candidates

³³ Minutes of the Shadow Governing Body, 1 March 1997, SAOMC Minutes file, SAOMC archives.

³⁴ Fax copy dated 8 February 1993, SAOMC A file, St. Albans archives.

³⁵ Minutes of the Shadow Governing Body, 24 May 1993, SAOMC Minutes file, SAOMC archives.

³⁶ Return to ABM, SAOMC A file, St. Albans archives.

from St. Albans and provision for the existing free meal arrangements for those attending evening sessions at the St. Stephens House!³⁷ The administration of the new Course was planned to be through a Board of Governors meeting twice-yearly and a Council of Management, to meet more frequently.³⁸ One of the spin-off issues for the St. Albans Diocese was the need to review its system for discernment of vocations, given the imminent end of SAMTS with the associated diocesan policy of encouraging candidates to go forward for discernment as part of training, rather than before.³⁹ A glance through the St. Albans files indicates the vast amount of effort needed, in such a programme of re-organisation, to put in place non-controversial but essential documentation, such as Articles of Association, Staff terms of employment, job descriptions, not to mention a newly-designed curriculum and support material for transitional funding from ABM. One of the issues which seems to have been subject to a 'fudge' was the lack of any guarantee to the new Institution that its initial financial obligations would be underwritten.⁴⁰

The first academic year of SAOMC (1994-5) saw the new Course start with 41 sponsored students. Tuition was divided between centres in Oxford and Luton and the latter group was reported to be viable in the face of previous doubts.⁴¹ An inaugural service was held at Tring parish church. At the time of inauguration the financial problems were not fully resolved, and there were also unexpected staffing pressures due to illness. The total student body, including 'lay' participants, was

³⁷ Letter from the joint chairmen to ABM, June 1993, SAOMC A file, St. Albans archives.

³⁸ Minutes of the Shadow Governing Body, 23 September 1993, SAOMC Minutes file, SAOMC archives.

³⁹ Aide memoire, 4/10/93, SAOMC A file, St. Albans archives.

⁴⁰ Extensive correspondence during 1994, SAOMC A file, St. Albans archives.

⁴¹ Executive Group Minutes, 21 September 1994, SAOMC A file, St. Albans archives.

seventy. It is understandable that any new educational institution should seek stability through effective recruitment, but an issue is raised by the following excerpt from the first minutes of the Governing Body following the launch of the Course:⁴²

With regard to recruitment, in the Oxford diocese the Vocations Network was very important and the Principal had recently met with the Advisers and supplied them with information about the Course... There was no such network in the St. Albans Diocese and it was more difficult to seek candidates with vocations.

The question raised is as to whether a Regional Theological Course should seek to serve those whom the Church discerns are being called to ordination, or whether a Course should be able to engage actively in recruitment as a part of the discernment of vocation. Most people would undoubtedly say that the dissemination of information about training can be nothing but helpful. But it is helpful also to be aware that the creation of an independent institution will inevitably inject motives of self-survival into relationships with possible students. Language such as, 'I continue to be anxious about the supply of candidates from St. Albans Diocese',⁴³ serves further to illustrate this point, as does the Management Council comment, 'Every effort was being made in the St. Albans Diocese to recruit candidates for the next academic year, including: articles in diocesan publications and visits to deanery synods.'⁴⁴ A list of SAOMC students printed in the Principal's Report in February 1995⁴⁵ illustrates the diversity of the student body, a feature increasingly

⁴² Governing Body Minutes, 8 December 1994, SAOMC Minutes file, SAOMC archives.

⁴³ Principal's Report to Council of Management, 16 February 1995, SAOMC A file, St. Albans archives.

⁴⁴ Council of Management Minutes, 16 February 1995, SAOMC Minutes file, SAOMC archives.

⁴⁵ Principal's Report to Council of Management, 16 February 1995, SAOMC A file, St. Albans archives.

commonplace in the Regional Courses, and invites the question as to how one small institution can adequately offer specialist training to meet so many differing needs.

The 66 students in training were divided as follows:

- 7 stipendiary candidates
- 29 non-stipendiary candidates, divided between intending ministers in secular employment and parish ministers
- 4 LNSM candidates
- 2 training for lay ministry
- 2 Methodist deacons
- 2 United Reformed Church NSM's
- 3 Readers
- 12 unselected (inherited from SAMTS).
- 5 associate students

If the new Course was diverse in variety, it also offered a richness of experience. The same report cites the positive relationships enjoyed by SAOMC through membership of OPTET in both its Anglican and ecumenical groupings, and bears witness to the enthusiasm of a number of students to undertake a term of residence at a theological college in what was hoped might lead to a pilot mixed-mode training scheme.

Another issue appeared at about this time, recorded in Council of Management minutes,⁴⁶ about the academic awards gained by students successfully completing the Course. Among the Regional Courses generally there was a trend to maximise these, and in the SAOMC case it was reported likely that the OPTET Diploma in Ministry for theology graduates would be replaced by a Master's degree in Theology.

⁴⁶ Council of Management Minutes, 16 February 1995, SAOMC Minutes file, SAOMC archives.

By the end of the first academic year of SAOMC, the Principal was in the confident position to be able to report to the Governing Body that 'with the collaboration of yourselves, the student body and the staff team, we have successfully united the two former Courses and have had a most creative and interesting academic year.'⁴⁷

Worries previously expressed about student levels for SAOMC seem not to have been a continuing problem. Indeed, the intake for the second academic year (1995-6) was 55.⁴⁸ It is true that of these, seventeen were candidates for the Local Non Stipendiary Ministry in Oxford diocese. The point was made that the LNSM training scheme for Oxford was the only one in the country making use of the relevant Regional Theological Course. No doubt with increasing student numbers came the increasing self-confidence of the SAOMC authorities, but the issue of whether the Course should serve ordinands or ordinands serve the Course still seems to have been present. The thanks accorded to the DDO's 'for their hard work in preparing candidates so well that they were able to enjoy and give of their best in the selection process',⁴⁹ would have been more appropriate on the lips of the relevant diocesan bishops than those of Course staff!

Early in 1996 the Principal of SAOMC was briefing the new Bishop of St. Albans about the 'problems of success' of the Course. These were mainly due to growth in student numbers, as in the observation that, 'weekends have been good but, naturally, a lot of the old intimacy has been lost when you have a hundred

⁴⁷ Principal's Report to Governors' Meeting, 7 June 1995, SAOMC minutes file, SAOMC archives.

⁴⁸ Governing Body Minutes, 13 November 1995, SAOMC Minutes file, SAOMC archives.

⁴⁹ Governing Body Minutes, 13 November 1995, SAOMC Minutes file, SAOMC archives.

people milling around'.⁵⁰ Six months later, in the 1996-7 academic year, it was reported that the students numbered 133 and that the Course employed six full-time staff and eight associate staff, delivering the Course in three centres.⁵¹ These factors made it the largest Regional Theological Course in the country. At the same time, it was reported that the Colloquium was still functioning and meeting, the purpose being to keep in touch with the North Thames Course and its associated diocesan networks. On a slightly more negative note, it was also said that staff were continuing to have to pay considerable attention to 'the way the Course is perceived in St. Albans Diocese'. It may be that SAOMC was widely seen as the successor of OMC only, rather than OMC and SAMTS together. Certainly Governing Body minutes reveal that Bishops' Inspection issues relating to OMC were being followed up, no mention being made of SAMTS!⁵²

1997 was a year of change for SAOMC in that it saw the appointment of a new Principal, and the resignation of both Chairman and Vice-chairman of the Governing Body and Council of Management (who had been chairs of OMC and SAMTS respectively). The Colloquium also ceased to function, and new teaching centres at both Oxford and St. Albans were being arranged. It may be noted that whilst SAOMC had started amid financial uncertainty, this had now been changed to financial stability⁵³ and overall what is perhaps the strongest of the Regional Courses had become firmly established.

⁵⁰ Principal's Report, 28 March 1996, SAOMC B file, St. Albans archives.

⁵¹ Principal's Report, 27 November 1996, SAOMC B file, St. Albans archives.

⁵² Governing Body Minutes, 27 November 1996, SAOMC Minutes file, SAOMC archives.

⁵³ For instance, at the Council of Management of 22 October 1997, a £35,000 surplus was recorded for the year. Minutes in SAOMC minutes file, SAOMC archives.

III North Thames Ministerial Training Course (NTMTC)

Oak Hill Ministerial Training Course (OHMTC)

(formerly Oak Hill Non Stipendiary Ministry Course and Oak Hill Auxiliary Pastoral Ministry Course)

The North Thames Ministerial Training Course had its origin in the same ACCM 30 / Lincoln Report discussions as lay behind the development of SAOMC, already described. It was in the same geographical area as the latter, but at the time of the watershed when all Courses were validated for the training of Stipendiary as well as Non-Stipendiary ordinands, its antecedent was very much ploughing its own furrow. Then known as the Oak Hill Non Stipendiary Ministry Course (the 'Auxiliary Pastoral' label having been dropped in 1977), its uniqueness lay in being a course of training provided by the staff of a residential Theological College. In its beginning (referred to in Chapter 2) this Course had been intended to cater for students from a wide variety of backgrounds from the dioceses of London, Chelmsford and St. Albans, within an obligation to honour the Evangelical Trust Deeds of the Kingham Hill Trust. Until 1990 the Course was in every way identifiably a sub-organisation of Oak Hill College – a fact made plain by the committee dealing with the Course being clearly called the 'Advisory Committee' until that date.

The issue being discussed by the 'NSM Advisory Committee' at the beginning of 1979 was the possible opening of a second Course centre at Colchester. This had been tried previously and failed, but was again thought to be warranted from that September, and this was agreed on the understanding that staffing would still be under the direct control of Oak Hill College, and that what

was taught at Colchester would be an identical syllabus to the one in the College itself. It is worth mentioning that the arrangement was distinctive in one respect, that all first year students were still to be encouraged to attend College, the second centre being intended for second and third years only. Presumably this was to assist new students to identify more distinctively with their training institution, although provision was also made for more diocesan involvement at Colchester in the future.¹

All varieties of institutional organisation and shape have both their advantages and disadvantages, and it seems that following discussions with the ACCM Moderator in 1980, plans were put in place for training for students in their own praying, and instruction in how to help parishioners in this area.² Presumably the residential students at Oak Hill were directed to a discipline of worship and spirituality which until then had simply been missed by Course members.

Discussions about teaching outposts were to continue for a little longer and after Colchester, the suggestion was made that a new centre at Chelmsford should be started instead for those students who could not be reasonably expected to travel weekly to Oak Hill. The initiative was to form part of the 'Colchester' scheme, but at the same time certain student doubts were also being raised as to the quality of teaching at the latter which, although being under the control of Oak Hill, involved not College but diocesan staff, and was felt by some to be inferior.³ If diversification geographically was becoming a real issue, a recommendation at about the same time that there should be a distinctive Board of Studies for the part-

¹ NSM Advisory Committee minutes, 23 February 1979, NSM ADV file, NTMTC archives.

² NSM Advisory Committee minutes, 3 October 1980, NSM ADV file, NTMTC archives.

³ Paper dated 30.1.81, filed with minutes, NSM ADV file, NTMTC archives.

time Course shows that diversification in terms of ministries being trained for was less on the agenda. Indeed, no awareness of possible training of Stipendiary candidates was demonstrated whatsoever,⁴ and the following year it was confirmed that the Advisory Committee wished to continue to have the description 'Non Stipendiary' in the Course title.⁵

There was another extraordinary issue about the awareness which the same committee was *permitted* to have. A footnote to minutes of October 1982⁶ reveals that the members of the Committee were unsure as to whether they would even be allowed to see a forthcoming report by a House of Bishops Inspection Team! Although it was confirmed that access would be allowed, the very fact of uncertainty indicates how totally the Course then owed its shape and running to Oak Hill College rather than to its own Advisory Committee. This assessment is confirmed by minutes responding to the Inspection Report in question. When this was received and it was seen the same issue had been picked up by the Inspection team, the Committee declared concerning its self-understanding that it was intended to be a 'spare wheel rather than a steering wheel'. Oak Hill College Council was clearly understood as the latter.⁷ Although the Inspection Report itself was not available for this study, it is obvious from the Committee's response to it that the Course's lack of organisational autonomy was an issue in contention. The fact that it was officially noted that the use of any tutors other than College Staff was not

⁴ 'Registrar's Recommendations', filed with minutes, 20 February 1981, NSM ADV file, NTMTC archives.

⁵ NSM Advisory Committee minutes, 12 October 1982, NSM ADV file, NTMTC archives.

⁶ NSM Advisory Committee minutes, 12 October 1982, NSM ADV file, NTMTC archives.

⁷ NSM Advisory Committee Minutes, 15 February 1983, NSM ADV file, NTMTC archives.

working well, served perhaps to underline the issue from a slightly different perspective.

The strong control over the Oak Hill Course by Oak Hill College did not, however, make for any sense of isolationism. In the early 1980's, joint staff meetings were reported with the St Albans M.T.S. This was appropriate since the St. Albans diocese was then using both Courses for its own ordinands. Educational philosophy and teaching methods were both matters for shared discussion. At a practical level, joint student residential weekends were also being held, from time to time.⁸ However, a document prepared by the Chairman of the Oak Hill College Council⁹ made it most clear that it was reserving for itself as a matter of policy all authority over every aspect of the NSM Course. Notes from a joint meeting of the Advisory Committee and College Council held on October 1983¹⁰ make it clear that the continuing titling of the Course as 'Non Stipendiary' (in the face of Bishops Regulations) was due to concerns over reducing the College student body. Someone even dared to question as to whether it was theoretically possible at all to train Stipendiary candidates on a part-time Course (again in the face of Bishops' Regulations!). In case these issues should all seem extraordinary, it must be borne in mind that at this stage the total student body of the Oak Hill Course numbered only some two dozen,¹¹ which was very considerably fewer than the full time student body at Oak Hill College.

⁸ NSM Course Leader's Annual Report, 1983, NSM ADV file, NTMTC archives.

⁹ 4 October 1983, NSM ADV file, NTMTC archives.

¹⁰ Filed in NSM ADV file, NTMTC archives.

¹¹ Course Leader's Interim Report, 1983/4, NSM ADV file, NTMTC archives.

Through the 1980's, pressure began to be felt over the accommodation of part time students on Oak Hill premises, due to increasing full time student numbers. Other pressures which began also to emerge about the organic relationship with the College were allegedly a lack of understanding of the practical ministry of an NSM and lack of opportunity to experience worship other than of an Evangelical ethos.¹² Following the publication of ACCM 22, a major redesign of the Course was embarked upon and, in addition to these concerns, such matters as too extensive use of 'lecture with discussion' as a teaching method, and over-reliance on essays as a means of assessment were addressed.¹³ It was also perceived that new emphases and concerns being thrown up by the Church generally needed to be taken on board, and the draft redesign document illustrates clearly another issue which is not specific to the Oak Hill Course but an increasing general concern regarding initial ministerial education. It has often been remarked that contemporary issues are tackled at the expense of traditional core subjects. In this case the point is illustrated dramatically in that inclusion of the new areas in the midweek programme had the effect at a stroke of halving the Biblical, doctrinal and ethics components of the second and third years.

In 1989 the name of the Oak Hill Course was changed in order to delete the exclusive reference to Non Stipendiary Ministry. It was at this time that the formal management structure linking Course to College became the subject of serious internal review, prompted by the publication of ACCM 30. As this was the beginning of a major process of metamorphosis, it is worth recording the constituency of what was then a relatively small Course, but which had a

¹² Letters from Senior Student 1985-86, NSM ADV file, NTMTC archives.

¹³ Draft proposals concerning redesigning of the Course, August 1986, NSM ADV file, NTMTC archives.

particularly wide diocesan basis of intake. The figures published for the 1988/89 academic year were as follows:¹⁴

Table 8/2

Chelmsford	8
Guildford	1
London	3
London (Edmondton)	2
Oxford	2
Rochester	1
St. Albans	4
Southwark	<u>2</u>
Total Anglican	23
<u>U.R.C.</u>	<u>5</u>
Total Students	28

The change of name to the Oak Hill Ministerial Training Course was a belated attempt to describe the Course as what, since 1979, it had been supposed to be. But by then the train of events had been put in place nationally which were to result in the transition to the North Thames Ministerial Training Course in 1994. The story of the discussions relating to the ACCM 30 region previously served by the Oxford, St. Albans and Oak Hill Courses has in part been referred to in the preceding section. Perhaps the first sign of the new transition was the message received through a Bishops' Inspection report and subsequent discussions that the 'MTC should be considered equally as important as the Full Time Course'.¹⁵ A 'MTC Management Committee' was immediately proposed to replace the Advisory Committee. The regional discussions between the dioceses of Oxford, St. Albans,

¹⁴ Course Leader's interim report, 1988/89, NSM ADV file, NTMTC archives.

¹⁵ MTC Advisory Committee minutes, 6 February 1990, MTC MGMT CTEE file, NTMTC archives.

Chelmsford and London together with representatives from the three extant Courses have been described. The difference as far as the dioceses of London and Chelmsford were concerned was that whereas for Oxford and St. Albans a new Course effectively amalgamating two was decided upon, in their case what was involved was a metamorphosis of the Oak Hill Course into an institution which might meet in the same place, but which would more fully represent the new ideas as to what should characterise a 'Regional Course'. In due course in 1993 a Shadow Council for the proposed new institution started to meet, following acceptance of an action plan to that effect by the Bishops' Councils of London and Chelmsford early in that year.¹⁶ The name, 'The North Thames Ministerial Training Course', was quickly established,¹⁷ and the Oak Hill MTC Management Committee was wound up with coffee and cake on 10 May 1994.¹⁸

The commencement of NTMTC was marked by a healthy discussion by the new Council as to the possible effects of increasing numbers of students on the Course. The total for the ensuing academic year was forecast at a minimum level of 55.¹⁹ The self-understanding was of a status of 'a new collaborative venture. It is a partnership between the Diocese of Chelmsford, the Diocese of London and Oak Hill (Kingham Hill Trust)'.²⁰ No undue complications are reflected in the Council minutes about the transition from 'Oak Hill' to 'North Thames' status, but an initial

¹⁶ 'Ministerial Training Course, London/ Oak Hill/ Chelmsford', 1993, MTC Management Committee file, NTMTC archives.

¹⁷ Oak Hill MTC Management Committee Minutes, 12 October 1993, MTC Management Committee file, NTMTC archives.

¹⁸ Minutes of the Final Meeting, 10 May 1994, MTC Management Committee file, NTMTC archives.

¹⁹ Council Minutes, 25 September 1994, NTMTC Minutes Sep 94 – Dec 98 file, NTMTC archives.

²⁰ Introductory page of the first NTMTC ACCM 22 submission, filed with Council Minutes of 15 November 1994, NTMTC Minutes Sep 94 – Dec 98 file, NTMTC archives.

issue concerned potential future growth. No outposts were then functioning, and a maximum student body of sixty was reported, in the absence of extra facilities. This limit was the result of a general twenty students per classroom maximum on the Oak Hill site.²¹ Although there was some discussion on the issues, no firm conclusions were reached and as there was no immediate pressure on numbers, the matter was in part left in abeyance. Later the augmentation of core staff by the addition of associate tutors was to be introduced in order to increase the teaching resources available. But student numbers dropped for the 1997/8 academic year and the matter again receded.²² Other introductory matters involved the first House of Bishops' Inspection of the Course, during the academic year 1995-96, and validation both under the ACCM 22 process and by Middlesex University. The latter meant that successful completion of the Course would lead to the award of an Advanced Diploma in Theological and Pastoral Studies.²³ Later there was recorded some unhappiness with the inspection process, but this was not apparent in documentation of the time.²⁴

Overall, the account of NTMTC's progress as read through the eyes of Council Minutes leaves no impression of special features and little in the way of distinctive issues. Perhaps problems and controversies were effectively dealt with by others! Rather unusual and a little enigmatic is the isolated paragraph in Minutes of 9 July 1997²⁵ reporting the appointment of a Course student as an 80% full-time

²¹ 'NTMTC and Increasing Demand for "Part-Time" Training – Options for Development', a paper filed with Council Minutes of 16 May 1995, NTMTC Minutes Sep 94 – Dec 98 file, NTMTC archives.

²² Council Minutes, 12th March 1997, NTMTC Minutes Sep 94 – Dec 98 file, NTMTC archives.

²³ Principal's Report, June 1996, NTMTC Minutes Sep 94 – Dec 98 file, NTMTC archives.

²⁴ Principal's Report, July 1998, NTMTC Minutes Sep 94 – Dec 98 file, NTMTC archives.

²⁵ NTMTC Minutes Sep 94 – Dec 98 file, NTMTC archives.

staff member. This involved the individual concerned training for her own ordination by other means, whilst continuing in addition, part-time, to run a holiday company. The Principal 'clarified' that this individual 'had theological qualifications'.²⁶ Whilst it is increasingly in order for individuals to be appointed to posts without general advertising, if they are deemed exactly suitable, the wider issue of concern, already referred to in Chapter 5, is that of the extent to which staff on the Regional Theological Courses have experience of the work to which they are employed to train others. Perhaps it is the more important to note, therefore, that the next staff vacancy to be filled was subject to a more conventional approach of national advertising.²⁷ In the event the 'distinctive' appointment was to last for only a little over one year.

The academic year 1998-99 saw a time of minor upheaval for NTMTC due both to the departure of the Principal, and the difficulties caused by temporary lack of accommodation during a building programme at Oak Hill college. The appointment of a new Principal caused some unrest among other NTMTC staff, and it was formally minuted on 7 October 1998 that, 'the staff had been unhappy about being excluded from the formal interviewing process for the new Principal'.²⁸ At the same time recruitment costs of some £15,000 were reported together with the clarification that 'Kingham Hill would pay'. Taken with the isolated note in Council Minutes of 2 December 1998,²⁹ that NTMTC accounts were presented as a subsection of the Kingham Hill Trust accounts, the reader of the first complete file

²⁶ Council Minutes, 9 July 1997, NTMTC Minutes Sep 94 – Dec 98 file, NTMTC archives.

²⁷ Council Minutes, 8 October 1997, NTMTC Minutes Sep 94 – Dec 98 file, NTMTC archives.

²⁸ NTMTC Minutes Sep 94 – Dec 98 file, NTMTC archives.

²⁹ NTMTC Minutes Sep 94 – Dec 98 file, NTMTC archives.

of NTMTC Council Minutes could well reach the conclusion that whilst the NTMTC as a new collaborative institution naturally sported its own Council, the latter was far more a body receiving reports as to what was going on rather than giving visionary or even routine managerial leadership. In other words, it seems that someone else was making all the decisions.

By the academic year 1999-2000, student numbers were forecast to have shrunk to 45.³⁰ The problem of authority just noted was raised at Council in June 1999, and the constitutional position of the 'Executive Group' was highlighted as a cause for concern.³¹ It appears that far from being a Regional Theological Course operating on an autonomous basis and serving the dioceses of London and Chelmsford, together with ecumenical partners, NTMTC could more correctly be described at the time as a wholly owned subsidiary of the Dioceses of London and Chelmsford, and the Kingham Hill Trust, subject to their executive direction in virtually all matters. At the same time, it appears that the benefits of much of the previous organic unity with Oak Hill College had been lost, and the new Principal reported in October 1999³² that the two student bodies did not often meet and had few opportunities for forming relationships. The actual, as against forecast, student numbers shrank further, to 38.³³

It was proposed, again in October 1999,³⁴ that a NTMTC Trust should be set up, to become the legal entity of NTMTC. This was to address some of the

³⁰ Forecasts in Council Minutes of 4 March 1999, Council Minutes 99—file, NTMTC archives.

³¹ Council Minutes, 4 June 1999, Council Minutes 99 – file, NTMTC archives.

³² Principal's Report, 7 October 1999, Council Minutes, most recent file, NTMTC archives.

³³ Council Minutes, 7 October 1999, Council Minutes, most recent, file, NTMTC archives.

³⁴ Council Minutes, 7 October 1999, Council Minutes, most recent, file, NTMTC archives.

management issues mentioned, and it was suggested that this would lead to a more equal partnership with Oak Hill College. At about the same time, perhaps in response to low student numbers, the issue of where students were being sent to by their dioceses started to be discussed.³⁵ Some competition for candidates in the south-east between the Regional Courses was noted and it seems as if NTMTC was a net loser, with more from the dioceses of London and Chelmsford going elsewhere than were being gained from other sources. In March 2000³⁶ the Principal was reporting that NTMTC was suffering from too close a popular association with Oak Hill College, and was also reporting a misapprehension that what it was offering was not suitable for more able candidates. The term 'Noddy' Course was mentioned. It was thought that the restructuring exercise then in progress, might help to alleviate these perceptions, as might a proposal by Middlesex University that the NTMTC programme should eventually be re-validated at honours degree level.

In connection with the re-validation proposal thus mentioned, another issue arises, this time about the general use of notional 'levels' of study in Higher Education awards. It was proposed that BA track students should be admitted if they could justify prior accreditation of 90 CAT points at level one. They would follow the same course as other (Dip HE) students, but modules would be 'dual coded' so as to allow the same classroom experience to be assessed at level 1/2 for Dip HE students and level 2/3 for BA students. Many involved in the academic world would maintain that this amounts to the Course qualification being awarded not on the basis of Course content, but on the basis of past experience – and the

³⁵ E.g. Principal's Report, December 1999, Council Minutes 99—file, NTMTC archives.

³⁶ Principal's Report, March 2000, Council Minutes 99—file, NTMTC archives.

qualifications thereby received as a nonsense.³⁷ The Principal of Oak Hill was first-mentioned among those having reservations about this proposed new curriculum.

Whether or not it was in response to reservations about the direction in which NTMTC was heading is not disclosed, but perhaps the timing was significant when in June 2000 it was reported that Oak Hill College was no longer in a position to supply any shared staff to NTMTC.³⁸ The Principal of Oak Hill also addressed³⁹ the NTMTC Principal's previous assertions that NTMTC was suffering from too close association with Oak Hill, and countered that the real problem was the ambivalence of DDO's, who affirmed commitment to NTMTC but in practice sent a proportion of their ordinands elsewhere!

At the turn of the millennium, NTMTC's Principal was citing⁴⁰ 'a strong sense of community, high morale and a sense of confidence and expectation about the future'. Yet there are also indications that there was growing discontent between the Course and its once-parent College. At a time when elsewhere there was a general growing emphasis on clustering and collaboration between theological institutions, it seems that the energies of NTMTC were being invested in division and distinctiveness. Perhaps the real truth of the situation is that the initial change from Oak Hill Course to North Thames was only to the status of a half-way-house in the first instance. The student survey in Chapter 14 will cite the disadvantages of the initial withdrawal from Oak Hill. But at the same time the full institutional autonomy required to maximise potential advantages was not then achieved. The

³⁷ Council Minutes 29 March 2000, Council Minutes 99—file, NTMTC archives.

³⁸ Council Minutes 21 June 2000, Council Minutes 99—file, NTMTC archives.

³⁹ Council Minutes 9 November 2000, Council Minutes 99—file, NTMTC archives.

⁴⁰ Principal's Report June 2000, Council Minutes 99—file, NTMTC archives.

North Thames Ministerial Training Course was a Course that needed to re-invent itself after six years initial experience. In 2000 the results of this, for good or ill, were still awaited.

I East Midlands Ministerial Training Course (EMMTC)

(previously the East Midlands Joint Ordination Training Scheme [EMJOTS])

By contrast with the previous Course, for which details of university validation were raised as a problematic issue, the East Midlands Ministry Training Course stands unique as being the only Regional Course originally founded within a university department and continuing to operate on the same basis. Originally called the East Midlands Joint Ordination Training Scheme (EMJOTS), the change in name occurred at about the beginning of the time covered by this chapter. Unfortunately for the purposes of the present study, EMMTC proved the most secretive of any of the Courses, allowing no access to its archives. Fortunately a symposium document¹ containing contributions to mark the tenth anniversary of the Course in 1983 was traced in another library, and offers some insight into the Course ethos and student experience at that early date. EMMTC did provide a brief summary of significant milestones of the Course,² and this is reproduced in part

¹ Patrick H. Vaughan (ed.), *Training for Diversity of Ministry: a symposium, to mark the tenth anniversary of the East Midlands Training Course* (Nottingham, University of Nottingham Department of Adult Education, 1983)

² 'Origin and Development of EMMTC', undated but referring to the years 1973-95, EMMTC archives.

below in order to give at least some comparative data alongside that available from the archives of the other Courses:-

Although the original motivation to create the course came from the Anglican dioceses of Derby, Lincoln and Southwell, the intention from its inception was to establish an ecumenical course. At a very early stage the University of Nottingham Adult Education Department was brought into discussions, with several very significant consequences. Through the expertise of this Department, an integrated Certificate course was designed; general advantage was taken of adult education teaching methods; office accommodation was offered within the Department in Cherry Tree Buildings; and, most significant of all, the Course was to be open to non-ordinands. Thus, in a variety of respects, this unique association of a church training course with a University has helped to form the particular ethos of EMMTC.

The following are some of the 'markers' along EMMTC's way:

1973 – the East Midlands Joint Ordination Training Scheme (EMJOTS as it was then called) opened with a residential weekend at Edward King House, Lincoln, with 24 students under the dual leadership of Dr Alan Rogers of the Adult Education Department as the 'Director of Studies' and Canon David Wilcox (then Canon of Derby and now Bishop of Dorking) as 'Warden of the Course'.

1976 – Eighteen students complete the course, some of whom are ordained to the non-stipendiary ministry in the three sponsoring dioceses.

1977 – A new post of full-time Principal is created. Patrick Vaughan appointed.

1978 – A second concurrent intake doubles the size of the student body. Duplicate teaching in Lincolnshire begins.

1979 – The Church of England recognises EMJOTS as adequate training for the stipendiary ministry. A new post of half-time Vice-Principal is created, and Tony Chesterman appointed (till 1987).

1980 – EMJOTS changes its name to EMMTC in order to lose specific mention of 'ordination' from the title. The URC applies to become a participating church.

1981 – The Methodist Church and Leicester diocese formally apply to become 'participating churches'.

1982 – The teaching centre in Vaughan College, Leicester, opens in association with the University of Leicester.

1983 – A third concurrent intake enlarges the student body to about 70. A new post of Senior Tutor is created and Jill Robson appointed (till 1987).

A large celebration in the Great Hall of Nottingham University marks EMMTC's 10th birthday. A collection of articles by staff and students, reflecting upon the EMMTC experience, is published as No.5 in the Nottingham Working Papers in the Education of Adults: P.H. VAUGHAN (ed) *Training for Diversity of Ministry*. (Now out of print, but available for consultation from EMMTC office.)

1984 – A new half-time post of Lincolnshire Course Director is created and David Dale appointed (till 1986).

1985 – EMMTC purchases a Principal's house. The first Vaughan College class are awarded the University of Leicester Certificate in Religious Studies.

1987 – Central staffing structure is reorganised. A new full-time post of Vice-Principal is created and Susan Parsons appointed; a new post of Bursar/Registrar is created and Ted O'Neil appointed; Senior chaplains in the regions are appointed.

1989 – EMMTC moves out of Cherry Tree Buildings into the VicHallam Building – renamed 'Orchards Annexe'.

1990 – Central staffing underwent further changes with several new appointments. Susan Parsons became Principal. Michael Taylor Vice-Principal, Barry Biggs Senior Tutor (till 1992) and Vanessa Johnson Secretary.

1991 – The Course is upgraded to Diploma status in the University of Nottingham for students who entered from 1991.

1994 – In celebration of EMMTC's 21st Birthday, a Former Students Association is being formed to make its own special contribution to the ongoing life and the future of the Course.

1995 – A new modular course structure was introduced in September. The Course was formally recognised by the University as a post-graduate or post-experience Diploma at Level 4, fully integrated with a new award of M.A. in Theological and Pastoral Studies.

The symposium document published in 1983 is helpful in giving insight into a number of factors comprising a part of the then self-consciousness of EMMTC. In the first place a serious attempt at 'integrated learning' was intended, and it is stated on page 10, 'At every turn the "myth of coverage" was abandoned. It was willingly acknowledged that a number of areas traditionally "covered" would not appear on the Course. This would be no loss, provided the course succeeded in creating learners.' Unfortunately it was naïve to think that 'no coverage' was equivalent to 'no loss'. Ample evidence for the alternative assertion that 'no coverage' = 'considerable loss' is contained in chapter 4, where an education specialist in another discipline who attended such a Course was prompted to say, following the experience, that that pattern of training could never provide for busy people the opportunity adequately to cover everything needed in a way such that most students would feel happy and on top of what they were doing.

The document rejoices in the uniqueness of the relationship between EMMTC and the University of Nottingham Department of Adult Education, there being an 'integral' relationship (page 21). But while the University was clear to state, 'We are not competent to engage in ordination training' (page 29), it was nevertheless true that the entire academic content of the course consisted of a University Certificate and that (page 31) 'the University has maintained its absolute right to control the contents and standards of the course, and to appoint its tutors

and external examiner.' The propriety of this arrangement for ordinands required to hold faith of a confessional nature is at least open to question, and further doubt may be encountered when reading that the first Director of Studies was 'neither a theologian nor an ordained man' (page 24)!

One contributor to the symposium, a staff member,³ commented, 'If the Course were to tilt too far into the vocational preparation of the clergy, I would certainly become a stern critic.' Doubtless this could be constructed as a very reasonable opinion from a staff member of a university department who was a sociologist and agnostic. But it must seriously be questioned as to whether it was a reasonable judgement from a member of staff of one of the Church of England's Regional Theological Courses, whose very name declared it to be firmly an 'ordination training scheme' and subsequently a 'ministry training course'. Even more alarming is the student testimony herewith reproduced:⁴

"Jesus was not God." The words were spoken softly; yet they exploded like a bomb shell. The explosion happened as the Nottingham group mulled over some point of theology. "Jesus was not God!" the tutor repeated, as heads turned in his direction. What heresy was this? What about 'God, Light from...'? Surprise turned to anger as I prepared to defend my 'orthodox' position. And then... and then it began to dawn on me. The man was right after all! Jesus was either fully a man like me, lacking the omniscience and omnipotence of God, or he was a sham – God merely pretending to be man. It all seems so very elementary when one looks back. The statement was so obviously true. Yet at the time it was a rude awakening indeed!

It is perhaps not unusual for radical theologians in university departments to question traditional understanding. But it is most unusual for the editor of a symposium, the Principal of a 'ministry training course', to advertise and celebrate

³ Barry Elsey, in Vaughan (ed), *Training for Diversity*, p.34.

⁴ J. Edwin Hurt, in Vaughan (ed), *Training for Diversity*, p.34.

the success of teaching an ordinand what is contrary both to Scripture and the Creeds of the Church.

There is perhaps just one issue over which there is some common ground between EMMTC and NTMTC. In the last section relating to NTMTC, the practice was questioned of the teaching sessions being dual coded at different levels so that the same input related to either a Dip HE or a BA depending on the student. It is not inappropriate to mention at this point that the verbal evidence of Chapter 4 about students receiving Master's degrees without being aware of being so registered, refers to EMMTC.

There is no doubt that EMMTC has been, and continues to be, an integral part of the Church of England's Regional Theological Course provision, as well as serving ecumenically. It has always served a group of dioceses, and as such was not subject to major re-organisation in the early 1990's. Presumably it has been subject to an average amount of both criticism and encouragement though the cycle of Bishops' Inspections. It may be that access to archives would indicate nothing but a programme of positive development throughout the history of EMMTC. But in an atmosphere among all other Courses of much more openness, the question must at least be tabled as to whether EMMTC has things to hide. If confidentiality is maintained simply as a feature of university jurisdiction, this, with the evidence as to academic attitude cited, prompts the question as to whether total control over the academic curriculum by an institution whose purpose is liberal education is compatible with the requirement that ordinands are trained to serve and lead a confessional Church.

II West Midlands Ministerial Training Course (WMMTC)

(formerly West Midlands Supplementary Ministry Course).

Although founded as early as 1971 under the name of the West Midlands Supplementary Ministry Course, no archival materials seem to remain from the first decade of this Course. Records, however, survive from its reconstitution as the West Midlands Ministerial Training Course in 1981. Like the Oak Hill, later North Thames, Course, WMMTC is distinctive by being attached to a Theological College, in this case Queen's at Birmingham. Unlike Oak Hill, however, from the beginning the West Midlands Course seems to have been conscious of serving the needs of a number of dioceses, and therefore to have been more truly 'Regional'. The other distinctive feature of Queen's College is that since 1970 it has been a fully ecumenical institution.

The Committee set up to oversee the reconstituted WMMTC in 1981 was very much the policy and decision making body. This was partly in response to the differing requirements of the dioceses and denominations served. Responsibilities were tabulated as follows:¹

- a) To determine the nature of the Ministry for which students were to be trained.
- b) To determine the content of the training.
- c) To determine the methods of training.
- d) To determine the number of students on which Course fees were to be based.
- e) To provide pastoral care for staff and students of the Course.
- f) To provide publicity for the Course.
- g) To prepare the annual report on the Course to the College Council.

A Management Sub-Committee was also set up to handle day-to-day and personal matters. The Principal reported at the same meeting that the Course numbered 33

¹ Committee Minutes, 15 June 1981, WMMTC Committee file, WMMTC archives.

students and that Hereford was the only West Midlands diocese not represented. It is also obvious from the record that the Course teaching was essentially provided by Queen's College staff.² Whereas in previous years the Course had been much more specifically to meet the needs of ordinands, a broadening of understanding and attendance was, however, becoming evident, the nature of the Course becoming that of ministerial training in a wider sense.³ A part of this was due to a relatively high proportion of Anglican women who were then using the Course for Deaconess and Parish Worker training, following the closure of the then former Gilmore Course, and who could not at that point be ordained.⁴ The provision of a local tutor to support each student was another new feature at this time.⁵ Rather more odd was the suggestion made at the same date by the Director that there should be a place on the Course for Anglicans training for the full-time stipendiary ministry. Although Committee members appeared not to know it, their Course had been open to such candidates for the previous four years!

During the early 1980's, it is evident that the teaching on the WMMTC, as provided by Queens College tutors, tended to be very traditional, i.e. with a heavy weighting to the lecture format, coupled to assessment by essay. The new Director of the Course argued that current thinking was that training for Non-Stipendiary Ministries needed to be different from traditional full-time college training, the Chairman emphasising the need for candidates to look to their own experience as a starting point for learning. However, both students and other staff were represented

² Committee Minutes, 15 December 1981, WMMTC Committee file, WMMTC archives.

³ Committee Minutes, 2 March 1982, WMMTC Committee file, WMMTC archives.

⁴ Committee Minutes, 7 December 1982, WMMTC Committee file, WMMTC archives.

⁵ Committee Minutes, 15 March 1983, WMMTC Committee file, WMMTC archives.

as valuing and wishing to continue an academic course parallel to that of Queen's College.⁶ When the issue of the need to prepare certain ordinands for a work-based ministry was raised, this was countered by the assertion that the Course had always had a bias to parish-based ministry.⁷

Over the next few years, the overall size of the student body of WMMTC remained in the low thirties. Whereas some of the other Courses were at that time welcoming a high proportion of private students, only a few were welcomed at WMMTC, and that only provided that they did not 'unbalance the Course, which was primarily for ministerial training'.⁸ A target total of 32 sponsored students was set, and there was serious concern at the prospect of this level not being met,⁹ financial viability being of course the over-riding issue. The acceptable level of private students was set at a ratio of one in six. About two-thirds of the student body continued to be women. A gradual move to teaching on a thematic basis was introduced, in place of the more traditional academic disciplines and a 'foundation' course was put in place in an attempt to ensure that students had sufficient basic knowledge for tackling such thematic studies. The foundation course consisted of an initial term covering essential aspects of Doctrine, Church History and Use of Scripture, but initially at least, there was a lack of definition of the precise objectives.¹⁰

⁶ Committee Minutes, 8 June 1983, WMMTC Committee file, WMMTC archives.

⁷ Committee Minutes, 1 December 1983, WMMTC Committee file, WMMTC archives.

⁸ Committee Minutes, 19 June 1984, WMMTC Committee file, WMMTC archives.

⁹ Course Management Sub-committee Minutes, 10 May 1984, Management Sub-Committee file, WMMTC archives.

¹⁰ Course Management Sub-committee Minutes, 10 May 1984, Management Sub-Committee file, WMMTC archives.

In March 1985, Inspectors from the House of Bishops introduced themselves to the Management Sub-Committee and revealed that they wished, in a forthcoming inspection process, particularly to consider three features of WMMTC. These were, firstly the relationship of the Course to Queen's; secondly the Foundation Course; and thirdly the ecumenical dimension, concentrating on the experience of minority groups.¹¹ Whether the last aspect was fortuitous in its timing or not, is not known, but Queen's College Council was at that very same time refusing to admit to the Course a student from the independent Metropolitan Community Church, on the grounds that it was not accredited by the British Council of Churches. Later in the year, the conclusions of the Inspectors were reported to the Course committee as still being confidential. But it was known that part-time assistance for the Course Director was suggested, as was lengthening of the Foundation Course to a full year. It was stated that the final inspection report, when published, was going to be 'controversial'.¹² It seems that the withholding of the report from the Course Committee members generally was due to the significant personal criticism contained in it about the Course Director. In the first instance, the Report was therefore being dealt with by Queen's College Council, but it was necessary, in an exceptional move, for the Course Committee to pass a motion of confidence in the Director. This is explicitly recorded in the minutes of 27 February 1986.

It appears that the Inspectors called, among other things, for a greater degree of autonomy for WMMTC from the Queen's College parent body. But the Committee wished to continue to report to the Queen's Council, citing the

¹¹ Course Management Sub-Committee Minutes, 7 March 1985, Management Sub-Committee file, WMMTC archives.

¹² Committee Minutes, 17 October 1985, WMMTC Committee file, WMMTC archives.

precedent of the SDMTS operated at Salisbury and Wells Theological College.¹³ Various constitutional changes were put in hand, but the major issue at this time seems to have been that the news had spread about the problems of the Course. At any rate, the 1985 intake included only five sponsored candidates.¹⁴ Criticisms of the Foundation Course were reported as being dealt with through a review of the whole Course, then planned for 1986/7.¹⁵ Although overall student numbers were to improve, there was a continuing issue of ecumenical credibility which was being addressed during 1987¹⁶ when it was reported that there would be only one Methodist on the Course in the 1987-88 academic year. In the event, there were three in the new intake and the concern seems to have subsided. Mention was made of the low numbers of Methodist candidates nationally, but also of the need to involve more Free Church tutorial input.¹⁷ It is likely that the good news of total Course membership of 48 in the 1987-88 academic year¹⁸ somewhat overshadowed the concern.

Preserved in WMMTC files from the mid-1980's are the responses from the Principal to ACCM to a questionnaire dealing with issues in residential and non-residential training.¹⁹ They reveal something of the self-consciousness of the Course at this time. In general, Courses were thought to be of advantage for training for stipendiary ministry where candidates had children at school, but in practice it

¹³ Committee Minutes, 27 February 1986, WMMTC Committee file, WMMTC archives.

¹⁴ Committee Minutes, 27 February 1986, WMMTC Committee file, WMMTC archives.

¹⁵ Committee Minutes, 25 April 1986, Course Committee file, WMMTC archives.

¹⁶ Standing Committee Minutes, 14 April 1987, Standing Committee file, WMMTC archives.

¹⁷ Committee Minutes, 16 October 1987, Course Committee file, WMMTC archives.

¹⁸ Standing Committee Minutes, 1 October 1987, Standing Committee file, WMMTC archives.

¹⁹ Correspondence dated 18 October 1985, Miscellaneous, WMMTC archives.

seems that dioceses did not send their male stipendiary candidates to WMMTC. The last tended to attend Queen's College, and there was a danger of a sense of hierarchical divide between the two groups of students. Nevertheless, the principle of College training for those aged under thirty and intending stipendiary ministry was endorsed. Overall advantages and disadvantages for non-residential training were given as follows:

Advantages – Lower cost

- Contextualisation easier
- No upheaval for family.
- Not much time wasted – positive community life.
- Deskilling more easily avoided, as work continues
- Contact with church natural
- Spirituality for daily life possible

Disadvantages – Lack of time, particularly in Biblical area

- Difficult to introduce new experiences
- Lack of space for informal discussion – too much rush
- Spirituality difficult in traditional way
- Family pressures of a different sort

The year 1988 saw agreement of a new Course syllabus and assessment arrangements by ACCM²⁰ following the major revision previously referred to. There is evidence that there was some questioning of the theological content of the Course at this time. In connection with the new arrangements, Bishop Lesslie Newbiggin stated that there were 'profound theological issues which required further study'.²¹ At the same time the General Synod, asking about teaching on the Incarnation, was given what seems the guarded answer that 'the range of views

²⁰ Committee Minutes, 6 May 1988, Course Committee file, WMMTC archives.

²¹ Committee Minutes, 6 May 1988, Course Committee file, WMMTC archives.

represented in *The Nature of Christian Belief*, prepared by the House of Bishops of the General Synod of the Church of England, provided the parameters within which the theme was studied as regards questions related to the Virgin Birth and the Resurrection.”²²

ACCM 30 began to be considered seriously by the WMMTC Committee during 1989. One of its major criticisms was the lack of ecumenical consultation over the proposals.²³ In the files are comments of one bishop whose diocese supplied students to WMMTC, on the subject of catchment areas: ‘Yet another example of a fatal combination of centralising bureaucracy and ignorance of actual circumstances’!²⁴ These two issues were the principal ones over which there was disagreement with the ACCM 30 recommendations. The ecumenical dimension was of appropriate concern given the nature of the Queen’s College foundation. Aspirations to attract more Methodist students, and some from the United Reformed Church were evident, as were discussions with the Roman Catholic Church.²⁵ Meanwhile, the results of the latest Bishops’ Inspection of WMMTC were reported as likely to be ‘very affirmative’,²⁶ in marked contrast to the previous experience. Reference to the Principal’s Report dated 4 May 1991²⁷ indicates that one of the significant issues highlighted in the Inspection Report was the organisation of the Tuesday evening coffee break! As a result there was serious experimentation to try

²² Committee Minutes, 17 October 1988, Course Committee file, WMMTC archives.

²³ Committee Minutes, 11 May 1989, Course Committee file, WMMTC archives.

²⁴ Correspondence dated 19 April 1989, Correspondence re: ACCM Paper 30 file, WMMTC archives.

²⁵ Committee Minutes, 19 February 1990, Course Committee file, WMMTC archives.

²⁶ Committee Minutes, 17 October 1990, Course Committee file, WMMTC archives.

²⁷ Standing Committee excerpts file, WMMTC archives.

and adapt what was being done. This particular issue is not highlighted in order to comment on the state of WMMTC at the time, but rather to stress the incongruity of such matters being the subject to a general Church of England thirty year confidentiality rule, in obvious contrast to good practice in other parts of the world of education.

As discussion on the ACCM 30 report proceeded, there is no evidence of any sense of threat being felt by WMMTC, as was the case elsewhere. Indeed the Principal was able to testify that 'responding to ACCM documents, although time consuming, has been very helpful to the Course, and has clarified our sense of purpose and out method of achieving our aims.'²⁸ Particular issues were reported to include the setting up of a Regional Forum to invite input into tabled proposals from the Churches, Queen's, and the University and Selly Oak Colleges.²⁹ It was intended to use the Course Committee as the basis of this. Other actions included discussions with EMMTC, the Gloucester Course and NOC; the consideration of employing more than one teaching centre and investigation into the possibility of true independence for a WMMTC Council. Discussions yielded the possibility of validation of the Course as a Diploma in Practical Theology by the University of Birmingham, on the positive side. But there was considerable opposition to the proposal to add additional teaching centres. Relationships with EMMTC were also thought not to permit any idea of merger. EMMTC was reported to serve a large region and to have a very different ethos, particularly over their commitment to lay course members.³⁰ A link of some sort with EMMTC, which might *eventually* lead

²⁸ Principal's Report, October 1991, Course Committee file, WMMTC archives.

²⁹ WMMTC ACCM 30 digest of Steering Group Policy and Guidelines, Standing Committee file, WMMTC archives.

³⁰ Standing Committee Minutes, 30 April 1992, Standing Committee file, WMMTC archives.

to merger, was thought inevitable during 1991, but greater priority was suggested for the establishment of a collaborative 'consortium' of theological education providers in the West Midlands region.³¹ However, by the end of the year any idea of a future overall Midlands Regional Consortium as recommended by ACCM had been written off as unrealistic, following consultation with other interested parties.³²

One of the features of WMMTC in replying to ACCM 30, which is more evident from the archives than in the case of other Courses, is the care taken in surveying the opinions of the student body and past students of 1991/92. Commendably, the initiative of contacting past students was that of the then current student representatives.³³ The individual replies were carefully summarised,³⁴ and there was a strong feeling in the first instance that it would be wrong to limit choice by any development of regionalisation intended to save travelling expenses, but which would have the effect of being opposite to then current trends towards greater choice in secular education. It was said that for those for whom there was choice, the strength of the Courses was their variety. WMMTC was thought to have particular ecumenical and multi-cultural strengths. On other issues, students were generally happy that tutorial time was adequate at WMMTC, and although it was difficult for some to take full advantage of facilities that were available for support of the life of prayer in its corporate aspects, it was generally recognised that on the Queen's site, this help was readily available. A very strong opinion was voiced that due to the intensity of the Course, the ethos should remain distinctively aimed at

³¹ Committee Minutes, 6 November 1992, Course Committee file, WMMTC archives.

³² Committee Minutes, 11 December 1992, Course Committee file, WMMTC archives.

³³ Correspondence dated 1992, Miscellaneous, WMMTC archives.

³⁴ Questionnaire ACCM Paper No 30, Students response to the 10 questions asked, Miscellaneous, WMMTC archives.

those preparing for ordained ministry. Too high a proportion of 'general interest' students or prospective ordination candidates was seen to be highly negative. This last judgement is borne out by testimony in chapter 4 concerning a different Course with the opposite official ethos. The community aspect of learning together with like-situation individuals was obviously highly regarded and another suggestion which was seen as possibly diluting this, i.e. the establishment of more local teaching centres involving less student travelling was also strongly opposed.³⁵ As indicated above, the initiative to amalgamate WMMTC and EMMTC proved impractical, and the principal result of the for WMMTC was the formation of a West Midlands Theological Consortium to improve collaboration between local institutions. Advice was received from ABM during 1994 that clustering of WMMTC with Queen's College was preferred over previous Midlands-wide proposals.³⁶ The other significant result of the ACCM 30-prompted exercise was a move towards the validation of WMMTC by Birmingham University to enable those trained to receive a recognised academic award.

The minutes of WMMTC for 1994 indicate significant attention being paid to the relationship between the Course and Queen's College. Whereas there had been a close working relationship between the two at the outset of the Course, subsequent national policy had been for greater autonomy on the part of the Course – a policy now reversed. It seems that difficulty was experienced in this redevelopment of the relationship due in large part to issues about individuals and their relationships. It suffices to say that at a critical time of development of the Regional Theological Courses nationally, personal matters gave WMMTC a

³⁵ In another 'Students' Response' document, also Miscellaneous, WMMTC archives.

³⁶ Committee Minutes, 27 May 1994, Course Committee file, WMMTC archives.

disadvantage. At the same time a separate mini-crisis was being experienced, due to no student intake from either Methodist or URC churches in 1994.³⁷ The Course was very much maintaining its position among the small Regional Courses with a total of only 28 sponsored students (of which eighteen Anglican) and eleven others.³⁸ This seems to have prompted an opening up to more 'lay' students, in a reversal of previous policy, and there were discussions specifically aimed at the academic aspirations of such persons. 'It was agreed that the Course was about training for ministry, and that this included lay life in the world',³⁹ represented something of a remarkable statement in the light of WMMTC's previous understanding of itself.

Change in the relationship between WMMTC and Queen's College was formalised in 1996 with the launching of the new Queen's Foundation, incorporating the College, Course and a new Research Centre.⁴⁰ Alongside a new name went the commitment to the validation of both College and Course curricula as a single entity. No doubt educational institutions are always bound to change. Nevertheless, it could seem that in principle the new Queen's Foundation was little different from the 'old days' when the part-time Course was 'provided' by staff of Queen's College and both, at least in their staff, were united. Just to illustrate the impossibility of achieving stability, the institution having achieved the unity of 'The Queen's Foundation Birmingham for Ecumenical Theological Education in

³⁷ Document: 'Falling numbers: a response', Miscellaneous, WMMTC archives.

³⁸ Acting Principal's report, 20.10.94, Committee Papers (94-95) file, WMMTC archives.

³⁹ Standing Committee Minutes, 26 January 1995, Standing Committee file, WMMTC archives.

⁴⁰ Committee Minutes, 8 February 1996, Course Committee file, WMMTC archives.

the West Midlands',⁴¹ Bishops' Inspectors were then demanding greater diversity, asserting that the ecumenical basis of teaching must be balanced by a greater weighting towards individual denominational issues.⁴² Whilst WMMTC has not in its history had to face the same pressures for change as has occurred in other regions, internally (to the Queen's institution) the processes of change nevertheless seem to have been great.

⁴¹ Committee Minutes, 10 July 1995, Committee Papers (94-95) file, WMMTC archives.

⁴² Inspection of the West Midlands Ministerial Training Course: A Response of the Queen's Birmingham Council to the Recommendations, Miscellaneous, WMMTC archives.

III The Gloucester School for Ministry

The West of England Ministerial Training Course. (WEMTC)

Following a break in the archives from 1975, minutes survive of the Governing Body of the Gloucester School for Ministry from a (reconstituted) inaugural meeting in December 1983. It is evident from those minutes that this did not, however, mark a recommencement of teaching, as training activities were obviously then in progress.¹ Almost immediately plans were embarked upon for the setting up of a study centre in Ludlow, Hereford Diocese, for students living too far from Gloucester.² This was to be an integral part of the School, with staff suggested by the Hereford Diocesan authorities, but appointed and trained by the Gloucester Principal. At the time the School obviously also served the Diocese of Bristol. The Bishop of Hereford hoped that it would then soon be possible to set up another study centre at Hereford Cathedral,³ but this was dismissed by the Governors almost by return.⁴ The School had obviously just been subject to Bishops' Inspection, and it was noted that there were no comments on academic standards,⁵ presumably implying that all was well. All may have been well at the time. There was a

¹ Governing Body Minutes, 9 December 1983, Gloucester School for Ministry file, WEMTC archives.

² Governing Body Minutes, 30 March 1984, Gloucester School for Ministry file, WEMTC archives.

³ Hereford Diocesan News, December 1984, Gloucester School for Ministry file, WEMTC archives.

⁴ Governing Body Minutes, 14 December 1984, Gloucester School for Ministry file, WEMTC archives.

⁵ Governing Body Minutes, 14 December 1984, Gloucester School for Ministry file, WEMTC archives.

commitment to guard the academic integrity of the School. But the Governors' attitude to less able candidates makes for strange reading to the modern ear:⁶

Sometimes a diocese will invite us to 'do our best' for a man barely into joined up writing. To accept him is a spurious kindness, leading very quickly to yet more hurt and alienation for someone whose history very likely contains plenty of other 'failures'.

It is to be hoped that none of the relevant less able candidates ever found out what the Governors really thought about them!

The inspection process of 1984⁷ yielded among its recommendations the suggestion that the School should aspire to becoming a more truly Regional Course. But this was not welcomed, and it was not thought wrong or retrograde if eventually the Ludlow Centre should develop into a separate Diocesan Course for Hereford. One can only guess at the observations behind another Inspection recommendation that 'the Governing Body could be strengthened with the addition of more people with experience of theological education', but the very existence of attitudes such as the one reported in the previous paragraph does raise a question about relationships with the students. A different slant on this issue of attitudes is given by a letter from the Principal to all first year students during 1985 about the work-place ministry of Non-Stipendiary Ministers.⁸ Initiatives such as 'trivia of amateur welfare work' and 'pointless Jesus-talk' were most pointedly despised, which was odd for someone supposedly training ordinands to live out and share the Gospel effectively.

⁶ Admissions document filed with Governing Body Minutes, 14 December 1984, Gloucester School for Ministry file, WEMTC archives.

⁷ Information from an internal paper dated 25 January 1985, Gloucester School for Ministry file, WEMTC archives.

⁸ Dated 11 June 1985, Gloucester School for Ministry file, WEMTC archives.

Arising out of the self-understanding of the School, 1986 saw a letter from the Chairman of Governors to the Archbishop of Canterbury⁹ couched in 'the strongest possible terms'. This was occasioned by ACCM 22 and one of the strong points being made was Gloucester's opposition to any notion that a central syllabus or rationale for training should cease to exist, as a touchstone for all proposed variations upon it. At the time the protest went unheeded but in due course, as has been indicated in chapter 6, the concern for the continuous need to specify training expectations was shown to have substance. There is evidence that this traditional approach was marked by great diligence and a 'mini' Inspection in 1986 seems to have included the criticism that lecture input in each subject area was far too comprehensive due to lecturers' feeling obliged to 'cover the ground'.

In the 1986-7 academic year, student numbers were 54, of whom thirteen were based at Ludlow.¹⁰ Following the foundation of the latter centre, there had been considerable debate concerning issues of financial viability and the desirability that Hereford Diocese should guarantee a minimum annual quota of students to ensure this. Against a generally very traditional background, the subject of missiology was put on the syllabus as a discrete discipline.¹¹ This was at the initiative of a new full-time Principal, but this appointment caused further financial worries in connection with the planned transfer of responsibility for the post from the Hereford Diocese to the Gloucester School over a number of years.¹²

⁹ Filed in Gloucester School for Ministry file, WEMTC archives.

¹⁰ Principal's Report, 13 March 1987, Gloucester School for Ministry file, WEMTC archives.

¹¹ Principal's Report, 13 March 1987, Gloucester School for Ministry file, WEMTC archives.

¹² Governing Body Minutes, 13 March 1987, Gloucester School for Ministry file, WEMTC archives.

The adoption of the ACCM 22 report by the Church of England nationally caused the School to have to redesign its course, which had previously been tailored to preparation for the General Ministerial Examination. This was in progress during 1987.¹³ One fundamental change being planned was in connection with the relationship of weekday teaching sessions and residential weekends. Previously the G.M.E. requirements had been dealt with midweek, leaving residentials for other pastoral and professional requirements. A much more integrated structure was henceforward envisaged, with formal assessment, not only of the acquisition of traditional academic knowledge, but also of both ministerial skills and personal development. Approval was given by ACCM for commencement of the new arrangements in autumn 1988.¹⁴ The School hoped also to achieve independent academic validation, and at the time the main possibility being pursued was through the CNAA, but nothing definitive had been agreed.

At this point in its history, the Gloucester School was forced, in common with other Courses, to consider the ACCM 30 recommendations. Initially four options were tabled for discussion.¹⁵ These were, firstly, 'we try to stay as we are'; secondly, 'we continue as a course for two dioceses, but widen the purpose of the course'; thirdly, 'we pursue the example given in the report of including Worcester in our catchment area'; fourthly, 'we seek a link with the West Midlands Course'. In discussing these options¹⁶ there was a sober consciousness that the first,

¹³ Governing Body Minutes, 13 November 1987, Gloucester School for Ministry file, WEMTC archives.

¹⁴ Correspondence dated 16 May 1988, Gloucester School for Ministry file, WEMTC archives.

¹⁵ Governing Body Minutes, 24 February 1989, Gloucester School for Ministry file, WEMTC archives.

¹⁶ Document, 'Possible Responses to the Working Party on the Structure and finance of Courses', Gloucester School for Ministry file, WEMTC archives.

representing maintenance of the status-quo, was unrealistic since a down turn in numbers of ordinands meant that the two Dioceses of Gloucester and Hereford were unlikely to be able to guarantee the total of eight annually, necessary for the ACCM definition of viability. Ecumenical participation was not seen as a factor likely to improve this situation, due to an absence of Methodist and United Reformed candidates.¹⁷ The then current organisation of the Course employed part-time teaching staff and there is some indication that this small-Course feature was not working as well as it could. November 1989 saw the Governors considering¹⁸ student observations that some tutors were failing to 'deliver the goods' due to being tired and over-pressed. The external examiner related this to the lack of opportunity provided amidst parochial duties for proper preparation. There was little opportunity for alternative staffing arrangements, with a contracting student body which numbered 38 in 1990, of which only ten were ACCM recommended ordinands.¹⁹ Efforts to increase the student body included negotiating the training of Hereford Reader candidates,²⁰ but by definition this could not affect the total of sponsored ordinands.

Following a meeting with the Bishop of Lincoln's Working Party in 1991, the School Governors found themselves considering a proposal for amalgamating into a Regional Course covering an area from Ludlow to Truro with all stops in-between! A change of name to the 'Gloucester and Hereford School for Ministry'

¹⁷ Governing Body Minutes, 6 June 1989, Gloucester School for Ministry file, WEMTC archives.

¹⁸ Governing Body Minutes, 10 November 1989, Gloucester School for Ministry file, WEMTC archives.

¹⁹ Principal's Report, 9 February 1990, Gloucester School for Ministry file, WEMTC archives.

²⁰ Governing Body minutes, 9 February 1990, Gloucester School for Ministry file, WEMTC archives.

seems to have been informally adopted at about this time.²¹ In addition a much closer working relationship was envisaged with both the Diocese of Bristol and the Methodist/URC Churches. But following the rejection of the South-West Course of the possibility of constituting one over-arching Course to cover such a huge area, further developments were uncertain. What was clear, however, was that in yet another case the Working Party stood accused of not understanding the geography of England!²²

Meanwhile there had been further diversification in the area of provision of Reader training by the School. This did not affect the ordinand body, but did cause the School, as an institution, to be much more viable. Figures for the 1992-93 academic year included 28 ordinands, 65 Readers and eighteen others doing what was termed a 'vocation' course.²³ Of these, six comprised the first year at a new centre in Bristol. As Lincoln Report discussions proceeded, proposals shrank from having a common curriculum with the South West Course, to only a common statement of aims and objectives.²⁴ But with the new relationship both with the Bristol Diocese and with the Methodist/URC Churches, there was a further name change in 1992 to the now current 'West of England Ministerial Training Course'. Curriculum development at this time led to the adoption across the Course of one midweek evening of tuition instead of two, which was felt to be a loss by those students who had experienced the former system.²⁵

²¹ Governing Body Minutes, 21 November 1991, Gloucester School for Ministry file, WEMTC archives.

²² Gloucester School for Ministry Minutes, 14 February 1992, Current file, WEMTC archives.

²³ Principal's Report, 27 November 1992, Current file, WEMTC archives.

²⁴ WEMTC Governing Body Minutes, 24 June 1993, Current file, WEMTC archives.

²⁵ External Examiner's Report, 27 August 1993, Current file, WEMTC archives.

Although independent academic validation of WEMTC had been 'on hold' due to uncertainty over the Lincoln discussions, in January 1994 arrangements were made with the Open Theological College for advanced standing status to be available to ex-WEMTC students towards a distance-learning degree in theology.²⁶ All proposals for common working with the South-West Course were finally dropped in favour of Regional clustering arrangements soon afterwards.²⁷ This last then left the field open for the previous Course validation plans to be taken forward. One issue was that WEMTC now had three centres, each of which could properly relate to a different local academic institution! A model was suggested that validation should be through one institution only, but recognition was also sought from others. This would particularly have assisted with clustering arrangements at Bristol.²⁸ Eventually the Cheltenham and Gloucester College of Higher Education was chosen as the validating institution.²⁹ Although WEMTC wished to continue to participate in theological training at Bristol, especially in connection with links to other theological institutions there, in fact the hoped-for numbers of ordinands using the Bristol centre had not materialised, and the staff member employed there had to be made redundant, in the light of dwindling reserves and the need to cut costs.³⁰ High numbers of Reader students were tending to mask the ordinand level, which in 1995/6 was only 24, split between the three centres. A year earlier the total had been only nineteen.³¹ There were rumours that the Diocese of Bristol did not wish

²⁶ Correspondence dated 25 January 1994, Current file, WEMTC archives.

²⁷ WEMTC Governing Body Minutes, 16 February 1994, Current file, WEMTC archives.

²⁸ 'WEMTC: Clustering and Validation', 25 May 1995, Current file, WEMTC archives.

²⁹ Governors Minutes, 7 March 1996, Current file, WEMTC archives.

³⁰ WEMTC Bristol Centre Meeting, 2 January 1996, Current file, WEMTC archives.

³¹ Fees application document 1996/7, Current file, WEMTC archives.

to support WEMTC for training purposes to the exclusion of other reachable institutions.³² But continual shifts in the take-up of places between the different teaching centres were being experienced, and only a year later by contrast Bristol was described as 'very well subscribed.'³³

The redevelopment of the shape and content of the Course was in progress during 1996/97 in preparation both for ABM and Cheltenham and Gloucester College validation.³⁴ A modular approach to the curriculum was the basis of the new shape. Whilst the Governors were aware that most other Courses were already seeking academic validation, there were still some fears expressed, namely that the "module" might become a straight jacket; that the Course might become too academic and lose community/ personal formation; and that the spiritual development would be difficult to monitor, as would training in vocation.³⁵ The development of the curriculum did not, however, go hand in hand with an increase in student numbers. Rather diversification was again the order of the day, and whilst for previous categories of ordinands the total was down to nineteen for 1996/97, the addition of five Local Non-Stipendiary Ministry candidates from Gloucester and Hereford Dioceses made overall ordinand numbers appear stable.³⁶ The ordinand number seems tiny when it is considered that a revised Constitution document, drawn up at about this time³⁷ in connection with the validation process, quotes a

³² Governing Body Minutes, 21 November 1995, Current file, WEMTC archives.

³³ Governing Body Minutes, 13 June 1996, Current file, WEMTC archives.

³⁴ 'Towards Validation etc', a report to the Governing Body, 13 June 1996, Current file, WEMTC archives.

³⁵ Governing Body Minutes, 7 March 1996, Current file, WEMTC archives.

³⁶ Principal's Report, March 1997, Current file, WEMTC archives.

³⁷ Filed in Current file, WEMTC archives.

total of five dioceses as sponsors, together with the Methodist Church. Other aspects of diversification included consideration given during 1997³⁸ to the need for greater flexibility for incoming students, possibly involving the accreditation of prior learning and the provision of modules at 'level 3' in addition to those at levels 1 and 2 then currently available. Addressing of a need for publicity at the same time raises questions of appropriateness of competition between training institutions in the light of the Church of England's overall needs.

Diversification continued to be on the agenda for WEMTC during 1998 with ever-increasing scope. It was decided to bid for provision of the Methodist Church's new scheme for level 1 Foundation (pre-selection) training for ministry programme.³⁹ The provision of the Cheltenham and Gloucester Advanced Certificate in Christian Studies was also introduced, for non-ordinand candidates and mention was made of the possible need for a post-graduate track for ordination training.⁴⁰ A cautionary note was raised concerning the need to resist over-fragmentation within the community of learning. The Principal emphasised that it was the national Church bodies rather than Cheltenham and Gloucester College which was driving the increased rigour of the Course.⁴¹ At this stage there was a significant increase in nationally sponsored ordinands attending WEMTC, the figure for 1998/9 being forty.⁴² This extra attendance attracted extra funding and, in turn, extra staff provision.

³⁸ Governors Meeting Minutes, 11 November 1997, Current file, WEMTC archives.

³⁹ Governors Meeting Minutes, 1 July 1998, Current file, WEMTC archives.

⁴⁰ Notes from WEMTC Board of Studies, 4 June 1998, Current file, WEMTC archives.

⁴¹ Governors Meeting minutes, 3 November 1998, Current file, WEMTC archives.

⁴² Principal's Report, 3 November 1998, Current file, WEMTC archives.

Conscious of the need to seek stability for the institution in the midst of change in the world of theological education generally, the Principal appraised the Governors in 1999 of growing issues worthy of their consideration.⁴³ Among radical options tabled for deliberation was the possibility of reducing centre-based learning in favour of distance learning among local tutor groups. At the same time the introduction of contracts for part-time staff was mooted. A change from independence of WEMTC to a structure of organic link with either a theological college in Bristol, or the Cheltenham and Gloucester College was also raised. In mind as models for these possibilities were the relationships between WMMTC and the Queen's Foundation, and SWMTC and Exeter University. The motivation for these possible links was as to secure institutional stability through the inevitable yearly changes in student numbers and profile. The decision was taken to develop links more fully with Cheltenham and Gloucester College to implement the institutional aspects of these proposals.⁴⁴ As for the curriculum, it is perhaps appropriate to conclude with two quotations which together convey a sense of the issues being deliberated by the Governors as the Course entered the third Millennium:

WEMTC needs to define as closely as it can the particular areas of training and education in which it can make a significant offering to the Region. At present this is predominantly through training for authorised ministries, with some training for accredited courses for non-ministerial candidates. It is suggested that we look for a further diversification, but should be wary of becoming too involved in general adult Christian education lest we overstretch our own resources and trespass on the good work done by other organisations.⁴⁵

⁴³ 'Whither WEMTC?' by the Principal, October 1999, Current file, WEMTC archives.

⁴⁴ Notes from a meeting to discuss WEMTC development, 24 March 2000, Current file, WEMTC archives.

⁴⁵ Notes from a meeting to discuss WEMTC development, 24 March 2000, Current file, WEMTC archives.

The Principal suggested a model in which WEMTC provided a pool of training opportunities. Individuals, and distinct groups such as Readers, Foundation Students, OLM's would then be provided with distinct paths through it. This raised questions of what is required of training over and above the accumulation of credits; and what is an appropriate level of collegiality for students training for any given ministry?⁴⁶

Over less than twenty years, the Theological Course which had developed from the Gloucester School of Ministry into WEMTC had changed beyond all recognition. From what had been perhaps the most old-fashioned of Courses where some students were even despised, it had moved into being an equal player at the forefront of the modern theological education provision, in which meeting the personal needs of a variety of different students had changed from being reluctant duty to driving factor. Throughout its history there is little mention of any problems with the academic content of the curriculum; rather the Course's story is one of needing to continue to adapt to the varying local needs of a region of relatively low population and the varying requirements of the central Church authorities, which have not always been mutually compatible.

⁴⁶ Governors' Meeting Minutes, 14 June 2000, Current file, WEMTC archives.

Chapter 10: Development of Individual Courses 1979-2000: The South and East

I Southern Dioceses Ministerial Training Scheme (SDMTS)

Southern Training Scheme for Christian Ministry (STS)

Southern Theological Education Training Scheme (STETS)

The Southern Dioceses Ministerial Training Scheme (SDMTS) was founded in 1973 to provide part-time theological education and training for ordinands in the central south of England. It was founded as a distance-learning arm of the Salisbury and Wells Theological College which existed in the Close at Salisbury until its closure in 1994. As will be seen, that closure rather complicated the history of this particular Regional Theological Course. One complication seems to be that most of the archives relating to SDMTS appear no longer to be accessible. It may be that they are stored somewhere in Sarum College, the successor to Salisbury and Wells College in its use of the premises, but at the time of visiting in 2001 their whereabouts were not known by STETS staff. This history therefore of necessity concentrates on those periods and issues for which written documentation can be traced.

Reading from the SDMTS constitution,¹ dated May 1984, it would appear that the Course was in operation from 1974 to 1984 as an integral part of the

¹ Sarum College SDMTS file, Sarum College, STETS archives.

activities of the Theological College. (SDMTS, STS and STETS were all properly titled 'Schemes' rather than 'Courses', but with the advent of 'Schemes' for Local Ordained Ministry training this nomenclature has become subject to confusion.) Following 1984, the Course continued to be an integral part of the College but thenceforth had a separate Constitution and Instrument and Articles of Government. This specified that as an integral part of the College, the well-being of SDMTS remained the responsibility of the College Governors, but its policy direction then became vested in 'the Board of the Scheme'. *Overall* governance was deemed to be according to 'the Instrument and Articles of Government of the said College'. The sponsoring Dioceses of that time were Bath and Wells, Chichester, Portsmouth, Salisbury and Winchester.

The size of SDMTS in 1984 was substantial; the student body of nationally sponsored ordinands numbered no fewer than 64. There were 2½ equivalent full-time core staff, but the most significant staffing statistic was of the 64 local tutors.² This indicates that in every case students used their distance-learning materials in conjunction with a local tutor in a one-to-one tutorial relationship. Straight away the issue must be raised as to how, even in five dioceses, it was possible to find 64 people each with the subject expertise of a number of staff in a theological institution. There is no evidence to suggest that tutors were changed during any given student's time with SDMTS in order to reflect differing academic aptitudes. By the 1986/87 academic year, this already amazing total of Local Tutors had risen still further, to eighty.³ The Director's Report for January 1985⁴ indicates an

² Fees application for 1985/86, Sarum College SDMTS file, STETS archives.

³ Fees application for 1988/89, Sarum College SDMTS file, STETS archives.

⁴ Sarum College SDMTS file, STETS archives.

extremely widespread clientele, encompassing no fewer than nine dioceses, the United Reformed and U.S. Episcopal Churches. The same report indicates that the local tutor arrangements were complemented by teaching from SDMTS and the Salisbury and Wells Theological College staff during residential periods. Funds were being generated by the sale of distance learning materials, in large measure to individual purchasers following an advertisement in the *Church Times*. The materials were also being sold to the East Anglian Course, as will be seen in the next chapter division. EAMTC relied exclusively on SDMTS for teaching materials for several years of its existence.

Although SDMTS was organised as a part of the overall activities of the Theological College, all was not well with relationships between students in the two different avenues of training. Bishops' Inspectors, visiting SDMTS during 1984, had highlighted as a significant problem the allocation of rooms in College to full-time married students (who presumably desired access to them during vacations) and then also allowing use of the same rooms by SDMTS students on residential. Conflict was said to be driving a wedge between the two groups.⁵ There is also evidence of conflict between SDMTS staff and the Bishops' Inspectors! Of the latter it was said baldly by the former that they 'did not understand non-stipendiary ministry'!⁶ No doubt these were both short-lived.

During the 1985/86 academic year a curriculum working party was in progress.⁷ It was thought that any wholesale revision of the materials then in use could not be achieved without the employment of outside assistance. By contrast,

⁵ Board Minutes, 1 February 1985, Sarum College SDMTS file, STETS archives.

⁶ Board Minutes, 1 February 1985, Sarum College SDMTS file, STETS archives.

⁷ Board Minutes, 28 April 1986, Sarum College SDMTS file, STETS archives.

one achievable objective for which there was some enthusiasm was the suggestion of an automatic mid-course review of the local tutor arrangement for each student. It appears that the overall curriculum revision went ahead in spite of this opinion, but a five-year timetable for satisfactory implementation of this was forecast.⁸ Development of the curriculum was also being matched by development in the constituency of the student body, and in January 1987 the Director reported⁹ that whereas 'in the early days' the Scheme had primarily trained men for Non-Stipendiary ministry, only 33 of the then student body of 68 were so intending. Presumably this means therefore that by a small margin the majority of SDMTS students were then training to be Stipendiary.

It appears that the SDMTS curriculum exercise had its genesis in a recommendation of Bishops' Inspectors during a visit in 1984. At that time, students were being assessed via the GME essay scheme. Impetus was given by the ACCM 22 requirements, subsequently published, which required each institution to define its own training objectives and assessment procedures, and the new curriculum was approved by ACCM for implementation, in May 1987, seemingly without serious comment.¹⁰

1988 saw application from Bristol Diocese to enrol candidates with SDMTS. It was reported that that diocese had had its own small training scheme, but this had been in abeyance for two years and was now discontinued. The application was agreed to on the same basis as from any other non-sponsoring diocese, and at this point there is a further break in the archive records.

⁸ 'Staffing Policy', a discussion paper dated October 1986, Sarum College SDMTS file, STETS archives.

⁹ Director's Report, January 1987, Sarum College SDMTS file, STETS archives.

¹⁰ Director's Report, October 1987, Sarum College SDMTS file, STETS archives.

The decision to close the Salisbury and Wells Theological College in 1994 presented a major problem for SDMTS. A not unfair analogy is the death of one of a pair of Siamese twins. Even though it had its own managing Board, SDMTS had remained the distance-learning provider arm of that institution. The whole organisational base of the theological institution, even the legal ownership of SDMTS, was soon to be no more. To make matters worse, recognition was also withdrawn from the Chichester Theological College at the same time. From a regional point of view, SDMTS was to be left as the sole provider of theological education for Anglicans in an area which had hitherto had two residential colleges as field-leaders. This dramatic change in situation led to a prolonged process of consideration of options for the future. The years 1993-96 were a time of extreme stress for the staff of SDMTS due to the pressures of unknown change, and in April 1996 the Clerk to the Managing Trustees of the (then closed) Salisbury and Wells Theological College was moved to write to the Bishop of Hereford on their behalf:

I am writing to you as Chairman of ABM to express my deep concern about the morale of the staff of STS...

The staff have lived with the threat of change and a lack of stability for over three years – a far more wounding and debilitating process than the effects of the decision to close the residential College. This included the uncertainty on where the Course would be based as there seemed to be a perpetual tug of war between those concerned. The work the staff were doing to hold the Course together was never really acknowledged or valued.

Canon John Fuller will be leaving for Wheatley in Oxfordshire in June and the remaining staff have now learnt that the job description for the post of Principal has been discussed and agreed without their input being sought and that slots in the new organisation have been allocated to them without seeking their views. This has dropped their morale to an all time low and, if it wasn't for their dedication to their students, I'm sure all would move on, being both physically and mentally demoralised.

Much of the problem of three years' lack of stability was inevitably due to the fierce debate within the Church during 1992-93 as to which Theological Colleges were to close. In 1992, the Lincoln Report list included Salisbury and Wells, Oak Hill and Mirfield. But following the anticipated howls of protest, Oak Hill and Mirfield were reprieved in the 1993 Hereford Report list. Unfortunately for the Southern region, Chichester was the new loser. Whereas the extreme North East and North West of England had had a number of years to argue against ACCM 30 suggestions for the amalgamation of Regional Courses, the overall situation in the South was new post-1993, and arguably left that region with the greatest change of all in the provision of theological education.

The process of consideration and planning of possible change, whilst drawn-out in the view of those whose livelihoods were affected, was probably not over-long in terms of general Church of England practice. At any rate there were many issues which had to be considered, and a number of distinct stages in that process which it is well worth outlining.

The first initiative taken was bilateral by the Dioceses of Chichester and Portsmouth and seems to have been taken in response to the planned closure of Chichester Theological College. A document published in September 1993¹¹ proposed a Scheme of full-time training for ordinands based on a model later to be adopted successfully by EAMTC in its Peterborough project. Groups of ordinands were to be situated in appropriate training parishes, initially in the West Sussex and Portsmouth areas, whilst training academically at one of the sites of the West Sussex Institute of Higher Education, possibly the disused building of the

¹¹ 'A New Model of Ordination Training for the Southern Dioceses' – a preliminary report dated September 1993, Evolution of STETS file, STETS archives.

Chichester Theological College. This apprenticeship-type model was far reaching and innovative as a concept, and it obviously had a high degree of influence over subsequent stages in the process. One of the major problems was to prove that it was a scheme in defence of Chichester rather than in collaboration with SDMTS and as such it was not progressed.

The 'Southern Region Theological Training Working Party Report' (the Gordon Report) was published in November 1994 and it recommended setting up a new Southern Training Scheme (STS) for Christian Ministry. Led by Bishop Ronald Gordon, Assistant Bishop in Oxford, the starting point was a consideration of the existence of an amazing array of theological institutions situated within the Dioceses using SDMTS for training purposes. The Working Party was commissioned by the Bishops of those seven Dioceses following House of Bishops' decisions in July 1993, but unfortunately as preliminary discussions proceeded, it did not endear itself to the staff of SDMTS. It is not surprising that an attempt to create a wholly new institution should be seen perhaps as an attempt by any other name to close SDMTS too! The January 1994 SDMTS Staff Submission to the Gordon Working Party¹² included the telling paragraph: 'In current discussions a dangerous and potentially destructive shift seems to have taken place, moving from initial plans for using SDMTS as a springboard for new ideas to replacing SDMTS.' It may have been no accident that significant change was planned. Published criticisms of SDMTS in the Gordon Report¹³ were '...too little weight given to biblical studies and the need for more attention to be given to Christian doctrine, and church history. Some believed there was too much emphasis on the experiential

¹² Held in Sarum College SDMTS file, STETS archives.

¹³ Section 3, page 7.

and experimental. Some wanted clearer accountability to the bishops.' The Working Party placed a clear emphasis on considering a co-ordinated scheme for both lay and ordination training. A meeting of the 'Southern Region Theological Training Consultation' on 15 March 1995¹⁴ decided to further the Gordon Report recommendations and to set up a Development Group under the Bishop of Guildford to consider the scope and location(s) of the new Scheme. Two of the guiding principles were to be the developing of academic work under the auspices of the University of Southampton and the development of teaching at local centres in addition to some continuation of previous local tutor arrangements. At the same time some sense of continuity with SDMTS was insisted upon.¹⁵

In an interim report by the Development Group¹⁶ five options were set out. These were:

1. To create a Board of Studies simply to co-ordinate existing resources within the Region.
2. To create a Board of Studies to develop "Centres of Excellence" within the Region.
3. To provide a firmer linkage between SDMTS and an HE college.
4. To create much closer links with Church HE colleges, leading to eventual location of ministerial training in the Church HE colleges. (This was the Group's favoured option).
5. To allow any institution to offer ministerial training, provided it was validated by appropriate academic ecclesiastical institutions.

These options were set up before a further Consultation meeting on 25 October,¹⁷ at which it was decided to go forward by drafting a Mission Statement embodying three concepts.

¹⁴ Minutes in Evolution of STETS file, STETS archives.

¹⁵ See correspondence dated 6 March 1995, Sarum College SDMTS file, STETS archives.

¹⁶ Held in Evolution of STETS file, STETS archives.

¹⁷ Minutes in Evolution of STETS file, STETS archives.

- The points of delivery should be positioned to offer an integrated delivery for ministerial and lay students; this was not simply about flexibility but should also offer changes in society and provide different levels of delivery.
- Lay education and theology for those not seeking ordination should be self-respecting: training for the laity should not be a transitional term.
- Whatever structure was devised must be open-ended and expandable, evolutionary not absolute.

Meanwhile the continuing SDMTS was working under the apprehension that it would be the basis for any proposed developments. The name of the Southern Training Scheme had been suggested by the Gordon Report and during a Bishops' Inspection in 1995, the Chief Inspector assured the Board that, 'there was no suggestion of closing SDMTS, but rather that from it STS would emerge'.¹⁸ The archives are silent as to the reasons, but possibly on this basis of assurance, the Board changed the name of SDMTS to the Southern Training Scheme for Christian Ministry at the beginning of the 1995-96 academic year. What could not be said was that all parties in the Southern region were working collaboratively for the best possible theological education in the area. Rather an atmosphere of secrecy and mistrust seems to have been engendered, arguably through a spirit of continuing competitiveness following the 1994 College closures.

In response to the change of nomenclature by SDMTS, the Development Group changed the name of the new proposed arrangements to the Southern Education and Training Scheme (later amended by the addition of 'Theological' – S[T]ETS). The final report published in March 1996 recommended that S[T]ETS should have an administrative base at the new Sarum College (formerly Salisbury and Wells Theological College premises) and therefore be in continuity with SDMTS /STS. But a whole range of possible locations for points of delivery were

¹⁸ Board Minutes, 31 January 1995, Sarum College SDMTS file, STETS archives.

still being put forward, including King Alfred's College, Winchester. The inclusion of the last perhaps indicates an issue not referred to elsewhere in this study. King Alfred's is a Church of England foundation, now specialising in radical studies in theology and sexuality, including the denial of Christ's Virgin Birth. Its inclusion indicates the over-readiness in the Church to respect the mere doing of theology without critical consideration of what may be taught.

STETS was given the go-ahead at a meeting of church leaders in March 1996¹⁹ and an interim Board was immediately set up, meeting for the first time in April of that year.²⁰ It seems to have been this meeting, or preparations for it, which prompted the Clerk to the Managing Trustees' letter (already quoted) to the ABM Chairman. The Chairman of the STS Board resigned. In fact the lack of STS Principal and Chairman probably made the new committee's work easier, and it pressed on with the planning of the new Course. Notable organisational points were that STETS was to be an ecumenical legal entity which was also to be independent of the new Sarum College (although having its administrative centre there).²¹ But when in the next meeting the Chairman made the self-congratulatory statement:²² 'The seven bishops should enthuse the House of Bishops on the basis of having achieved with STETS what they were asked to do; and on the basis of STETS' vision of making theological education available to the whole people of God', the retrospective observer may comment that there were aspects of the reorganisation about which the opposite of self-congratulation may have been more appropriate!

¹⁹ Minutes in STETS Meetings file, STETS archives.

²⁰ Minutes in STETS Meetings file, STETS archives.

²¹ STETS Interim Board Minutes, 22/4/96, STETS Meetings file, STETS archives.

²² STETS Interim Board Minutes, 8/10/96, STETS Meetings file, STETS archives.

STETS legally came into being on 1 January 1997. One notable appointment was Professor Daniel Hardy as Chairman of the Board of Studies.²³ The number of students handed over from STS was the high figure of 98.²⁴ The birth was very difficult, just as had been the planning. Just maintaining the delivery of theological education to 100 ordinands was a monumental task in itself. In January 1998 the Management reported²⁵ that the Director had

... had to deliver education and training for the Scheme's one hundred ordinands with grossly inadequate staff resources. The premature departure of STS staff, sickness and delays in recruiting have meant that, at the worst point, only one of the four full-time academic posts was active (namely the Director's). This has placed the most serious pressure on academic and administrative staff alike, and it would not have been surprising if ordinands under training in 1997 had felt that that were not being given the kind of learning experience they had a right to expect.

A rather unsavoury culture of blame seems to have been directed to the outgoing STS staff and Board members as illustrated to by the following:²⁶

The course inherited by STETS was weak, even on its own terms, and was seen to be so: the administrative systems were cumbersome, the academic culture insufficiently rigorous, some of the educational materials poor and the formational environment inadequate. Much reconstruction has been required.

But there was also considerable uncertainty as to what the definition was supposed to be of STETS' basic reason for and method of existence:²⁷

²³ STETS Interim Board Minutes, 19/12/96, STETS Meetings file, STETS archives.

²⁴ Acting Principal's Report (STS), October 1996, STETS Meetings file, STETS archives.

²⁵ Joint Report by the Board of Management and the Chairman of the Board of Studies on behalf of the Board of Governors to the Trustees of STETS for their meeting on 20 January 1998, STETS Trustees file, STETS archives.

²⁶ Joint Report for 20 January 1998, STETS Trustees file, STETS archives.

²⁷ Joint Report for 20 January 1998, STETS Trustees file, STETS archives.

The mandates under which STETS has been established are complex, if not ambiguous, and are being variously interpreted by those involved.

Over the following years a new staff became committed to the new Course, and the initial difficulties of transition became a thing of the past. The curriculum was updated and the wider vision for collaborative work between the region's various theological institutions was sponsored via a new Southern Regional Theological Network. The 1999-2000 Handbook announced that STETS then had a wholly new programme which was Theological, Missiological, Contextual and Integrated. A certificate, Diploma and degree in Christian Ministry and Mission were all available, depending on prior learning accreditation. But until STETS is able to establish a mature academic identity on this new programme, its main characteristic will remain that it was the Regional Course whose planning and launch involved the greatest confusion and hurt of all.

II The East Anglian Ministerial Training Course (EAMTC)

(formerly, briefly, the East Anglian Ministerial Training Scheme)

EAMTC from its inception has served a widely dispersed student body across a wide geographical area, principally involving the dioceses of Ely and Norwich and later extending to St. Edmundsbury and Ipswich and beyond. Like the SDMTS/ STETS Course just treated, it has specialised in distance learning, and indeed the earliest documentation available from archives, a general handbook dating from 1982¹ shows that all teaching material used was then bought in from SDMTS on an individual basis for each student, who would attend a tutorial each

¹ Council Minutes 1984-93 file, EAMTC archives.

week with a local tutor, coupled with private study, practical training in a local parish and weekend and Summer Schools. It was intended that the weekly tutorial should be arranged so that each student would have to travel for no more than thirty to forty minutes in each direction, but usually much less. Academic assessment was normally by the GME Essay Scheme. EAMTC was one of the latecomers on the Regional Course scene, having its origins in 1977 as a training 'Scheme' and changing its name to 'Course' two years later. However, much of the language in the 1982 handbook is in the future tense or indicates some lack of certainty (e.g. 'The pattern of work envisaged...') and it may be that after five years the Course was still very much in the initial stages of development. At a very early stage an ecumenical dimension is recorded through the request of the United Reformed Church to train candidates for its non-stipendiary ministry (although subsequently such connection was to prove sporadic). It was expected that their candidates would follow completion of the three-year, basically Anglican, EAMTC with a further year of distinctive URC studies. As to the style of curriculum, discrete subjects were taught in the first year, replaced by a thematic approach in years two and three.

The main issue relating to Course development which was under consideration at this time was as to whether or not it would be right for there to be a full-time Principal.² The initial policy had been that it was more suitable for the Principal and staff of a Course training men and women for the Non-Stipendiary ministry to be themselves engaged in parochial ministry and less than full-time on the Course. But with the increase in student numbers had come extra pressure on the Principal and a full time appointment was decided upon. The responsibilities of

² Memorandum on EAMTC, July 1982, Council Minutes file, EAMTC archives.

the post were, without the aid of any full-time staff, 'for the full range of selection and admission, training and assessing, supervising and pastoring, students spread over a huge area; and to depend in doing this on a staff and tutors whose appointment to the Course depends in turn on who is available within the region who is capable and willing to undertake this work, in addition to whatever his or her stipendiary ministry might be'!³ The second significant issue being considered was a move of the Course base to Cambridge, to take advantage of a link with the Cambridge Federation of Theological Colleges. The arrival of a full-time Principal took place on the autumn of 1984, and he was indeed based in Cambridge.⁴ At that time the student body numbered 21 and the incoming appointee declared a minimum level of viability of thirty.⁵

Some fairly swift re-organisation was then recommended affecting other staff, with the recommendation that 'honorary' core staffing should cease and part time paid staff be substituted on at least a 2 day/ week basis. A Director of Pastoral Studies was particularly urgent as an appointment due to ACCM requirements in this area not then being met.⁶ It appeared that 25% of all students were declining to attend the (compulsory) Summer School.⁷ With a reported mushrooming of training schemes for LOM's and Laity, the Principal issued a plea for priority in the recruiting of potential tutors for EAMTC and warned that there was a real danger of overloading key people.⁸ Some strategic thinking of the Training Committee caused

³ Memorandum on EAMTC, July 1982, Council Minutes file, EAMTC archives.

⁴ Council Minutes, 23 March 1984, Council Minutes file, EAMTC archives.

⁵ Principal's Report, undated, but autumn 1984, Council Minutes file, EAMTC archives.

⁶ Principal's Report, 26 March 1985, Council Minutes file, EAMTC archives.

⁷ Council Minutes, 9 November 1984, Council Minutes file, EAMTC archives.

⁸ Principal's Report, 10 June 1985, Council Minutes file, EAMTC archives.

the issue of mixed-mode training to be raised for the first time with the East Anglian Bishops.⁹ Later this issue was to come to fruition in connection with the Peterborough project. Happily, problems with student attendance at residentials were quickly resolved, but the proposed Director of Pastoral Studies did not immediately materialise. ACCM, having specified the need, now said that funding for such a post could not be justified at the present student level.¹⁰

The reorganisation of the Course had the effect of bringing out some weaknesses with its ethos of distance learning in connection with local tutors. 'Major defects' were said to be a rather unrealistic expectation of competence in a local tutor over a wide field, and a sense of loneliness and isolation among the students.¹¹ The development of a certain amount of centre-based teaching in the long term was mooted as a possible solution, but a pilot scheme for Ely diocese candidates for 1987-88 failed due to a lack of support from local tutors.¹² A sense of loneliness and isolation on the part of the Principal was also evident from his March 1987 Report in which the preparation of the Course's first ACCM 22 submission was described as 'worthwhile', but also 'monumental' and 'daunting'. A contrasting sense of encouragement was, however, received later in the year from contact with the Bishops' Inspection team, who indicated in a way felt to be very positive that they wished to affirm the Course.¹³ Action was also taken to relieve stress among students from the burden of progress assessment. Hitherto each student had had to

⁹ Training Committee Minutes, 9 May 1985, Council Minutes file, EAMTC archives.

¹⁰ Principal's Report, 19 November 1985, Council Minutes file, EAMTC archives.

¹¹ Principal's Report, 18 March 1986, Council Minutes file, EAMTC archives.

¹² Principal's Report, 10 June 1986, Council Minutes file, EAMTC archives.

¹³ Principal's Report, 6 November 1987, Council Minutes file, EAMTC archives.

endure interview by a panel including his or her suffragen Bishop and DDO. This system was changed to be more in line with college procedure, so that the DDO and Sponsoring Bishop could maintain a pastoral rather than judgemental role in the process.¹⁴

During the 1980's, EAMTC seems to have run on the basis of a maximum student capacity, rather than being open to all in need of training, as elsewhere. There are a number of references in minutes indicating this. The issue was due to the need for each student to be allocated to a local tutor, of whom there was a limited supply. Also involved was accommodation for residentials. At the beginning of the 1989-90 academic year, student numbers were reported as '25, i.e. one below capacity. There are 15 men and 10 women: 21 Non-Stipendiary and 4 Stipendiary candidates'.¹⁵ No doubt, had demand increased significantly, extra tutorial resources would have been investigated. But the ceiling of 26 ensured one thing – that the Director of Pastoral Studies issue, recommended by Inspectors but forbidden by ACCM, continued to lie unresolved. In 1990, one applicant was refused entry because the ceiling on numbers had been reached.¹⁶ An interesting side-issue, relating not so much to the development of EAMTC *per se*, but to boundary issues in connection with NTMTC, is that in the academic year of 1990-91 no fewer than ten of the Course complement now came from the Chelmsford Diocese.¹⁷ Four new local tutors, all from that Diocese, were also reported.

¹⁴ Paper entitled 'Assessments', filed with Principal's Report of 17 November 1988, Council Minutes file, EAMTC archives.

¹⁵ Principal's Report, 26 October 1989, Council Minutes file, EAMTC archives.

¹⁶ Council Minutes, 27 June 1990, Council Minutes file, EAMTC archives.

¹⁷ Principal's Report, 12 November 1990, Council Minutes file, EAMTC archives.

At a meeting of the Principal and the ten East Anglian Bishops in 1991, the issue of Course capacity was discussed. Advantages were seen in expansion, including the likely ACCM funding of a Director of Pastoral Studies. In principle it was decided to expand over the following years to a complement of 35 students.¹⁸ It had already been decided to appoint a half-time Director of Pastoral Studies without ACCM funding,¹⁹ presumably on the basis of diocesan support. A major revision of the curriculum was also under way, and this was expected to be approved by ACCM in time for full introduction in autumn 1992.²⁰ Whereas five years before, loneliness and isolation had been noted as particular student problems, now the Council was made aware of two more curriculum-based issues. The first was that students from the extremes of the Church's varying traditions were saying that it was difficult to get their voices heard. The second was that those who were likely to be in secular work (as MSE's) had little opportunity to reflect and learn about this form of ministry.²¹

The process for gaining accreditation under the new ACCM 22 requirements seems to have been particularly difficult for EAMTC. Validation on the basis of the original submissions was only granted subject to what ABM described as 'three conditions'.²² In fact, these were more like three categories of condition, because a total of thirteen individual conditions with two 'encouragements to keep under review' were tabulated. Inadequacy was found with the specification of objectives

¹⁸ Principal's Report, 13 March 1991, Council Minutes file, EAMTC archives.

¹⁹ Council Minutes, 12 November 1990, Council Minutes file, EAMTC archives.

²⁰ Council Minutes, 13 March 1991, Council Minutes file, EAMTC archives.

²¹ Council Minutes, 13 March 1991, Council Minutes file, EAMTC archives.

²² Correspondence for ABM, dated 18 September 1991, Miscellaneous file, EAMTC archives.

concerning various areas of the curriculum. Urgent action was specified. Much more work was also required in defining an overall methodology for assessment. Furthermore an assessment was required of the strengths and weaknesses of the tutorial system. The language used suggests that ABM saw an inconsistency between one-to-one teaching and preparation for a corporate ministry, and a lack of co-ordination between tutorials and residentials with the overall pattern of student activity. The formalisation of assessment of prior learning on the part of individuals rather than what would naturally happen as part of the continuing tutorial relationship was also required.

At this stage in its history, discussions about ACCM 30 started to hit EAMTC in earnest, at least in the person of the Principal. Whereas in other Courses there had been major issues to be fought over geography, amalgamations etc., in this case the major problem appears to have been the sheer impossibility that the one full-time member of staff should be able to deal with the paperwork and negotiations involved. It should be remembered that the responsibilities of a Principal on a Regional Course using distance-learning material were very different from those involved in more conventional centre-based teaching. This was partly because of the whole issue of finding, training, servicing and encouraging a large network of local tutors. But a resubmission required for ACCM 22 was also a significant factor. The following pointed report was made to Council:²³

There is quite a groundswell of concern amongst Course Principals about the pressures to which we are being subjected by a kind of creeping bureaucracy in the Church of England and in particular by the tight schedules within which we are expected to meet the demands laid upon us..... Speaking personally, I have reservations about continuing in my present post under present conditions.

²³ Principal's Report, 10 December 1991, Council Minutes file, EAMTC archives.

In this situation there was some comfort to be gained from the fact that whatever might have been intended in terms of College or Course closure, it would not be possible to close EAMTC because of its geographical location!²⁴ Nevertheless the Principal took early retirement rather than continue.²⁵

ACCM 30 discussions were proceeding and investigations taking place as to how EAMTC could best serve unmet training needs in the region, and also what closer working relationships might be possible with other theological training institutions in Cambridge. At the same time it seems that ABM were insisting on a policy change over one-to-one tutorial arrangements and demanding a policy motion along the lines of 'It is the policy of EAMTC to group students with tutors wherever possible (i.e. where journey times in each direction would not exceed one hour).'²⁶ It may be that this change was demanded because of the new ethos that theological education should be ecumenical wherever possible. For instance, an EAMTC meeting with members of the Cambridge Federation elicited the information that one-to-one tutoring rather than group work was one factor effectively inhibiting Methodist and URC use of the Course.²⁷ Whatever the reasoning, the policy was implemented in practice, and steps were taken also to increase group tutorial times to the ACCM 30 recommended level of sixty hours/annum.²⁸ In addition, a system of 'Specialist Assessors' was implemented in

²⁴ Council Minutes, 1 July 1991, Council Minutes file, EAMTC archives.

²⁵ Principal's Report, 14 September 1992, Council Minutes file, EAMTC archives.

²⁶ Acting Principal's Report, 5 November 1992, Council Minutes file, EAMTC archives.

²⁷ Council Minutes, 15 September 1992, Council Minutes file, EAMTC archives. Although the URC had used EAMTC a decade earlier, by 1992 this was no longer the case.

²⁸ Acting Principal's Report, 25 January 1993, Council Minutes file, EAMTC archives.

order to check the correlation of marking standards between local tutors.²⁹ On a different issue, continuing talks with members of the Cambridge Federation resulted in a process aiming at full participation of EAMTC as a constituent member of the Federation, with a target student body increased to 40-45, comprising thirty Anglicans, five Methodists, three URC, with other additions.³⁰

Whereas throughout the 1980's, EAMTC remained dependent on SDMTS for teaching materials, from 1992 a completely revised syllabus was successfully implemented following the Course's ACCM 22 submission,³¹ following compliance with the conditions already mentioned. Membership of the Cambridge Federation was agreed as beginning in the academic year 1994/5, and the issue of students possibly wishing to study CTM (Certificate in Theology for Ministry) modules instead of their EAMTC equivalents was raised. Academic validation was another question which was discussed as needing to be resolved. This was not possible through Cambridge University, due to its residence requirements, but other options were available.³² It was a very positive point for a new Principal to join EAMTC, with most of the contentious issues having been resolved and openings presented for positive growth and development for the future.

Out of the new relationship with the Cambridge Theological Federation came the immediate suggestion that the exploration of mixed-mode training should be considered in the case of individual students, given the breadth of facilities now

²⁹ 'The role of the ABM External Examiner in relation to the special needs of EAMTC', a paper dated 2 March 1992, Miscellaneous file, EAMTC archives.

³⁰ Council Minutes, 25 January 1993, Council Minutes file, EAMTC archives.

³¹ See the submission document, Miscellaneous file, EAMTC archives.

³² EAMTC and Cambridge Federation, A proposal from the Working Party meetings of 15/12/92 and 14/5/93, Miscellaneous file, EAMTC archives.

available within the Federation.³³ Consultations also started to take place about the possibility of EAMTC involvement in the developing needs for training for the Local Non-Stipendiary Ministry. Certain regional-level involvement with the latter for the Norwich Diocese was requested, but anything similar in connection with St. Edmundsbury and Ipswich was deemed unlikely. Meanwhile, there seems to have been a slip in nationally-sponsored candidates on the Course, the level for the 1993/4 year having fallen to 23.³⁴ In a faint echo of language previously in use at Gloucester, the incoming students were described as 'the usual rich and fascinating mixture of humanity'.³⁵ Proposals were tabled for serious discussions about the possibility of now bringing ideas, which had been circulating concerning provision of a post-graduate course, to fruition.³⁶ In particular, provision was to be explored for the full-time provision for parish-based 'apprenticeship' studies for those theology graduates who had either not the aptitude or not the desire for a 'purely academic' higher degree.³⁷

Negotiations were next opened with Suffolk College with a view to validation by the University of East Anglia. The proposal was that students should qualify for a Certificate after two years with the possibility of building this into a Diploma by the end of three years and a degree during subsequent post-ordination studies.³⁸ Maybe the increasingly positive tone of EAMTC direction was in part

³³ Council Minutes, 18 June 1993, EAMTC Council file, EAMTC archives.

³⁴ Council Minutes, 21 September 1993, EAMTC Council file, EAMTC archives.

³⁵ Principal's Report, 6 January 1994, EAMTC Council file, EAMTC archives.

³⁶ Council Minutes, 6 January 1994, EAMTC Council file, EAMTC archives.

³⁷ 'Future Directions for the Course', a discussion paper dated December 1993, EAMTC Council file, EAMTC archives.

³⁸ Principal's Report, 7 June 1994, EAMTC Council file, EAMTC archives.

responsible for a jump in student numbers to 41 for 1994/95.³⁹ In addition to the courses validated by the University of East Anglia, work began on the provision of an MA in Pastoral Theology programme, in connection with Anglia Polytechnic University.⁴⁰ The upbeat tone of Course experience was reflected by the student representative on Council, who stated for the minutes, 'Good seems to have taken hold of the EAMTC.'⁴¹ By the summer of 1996, the Principal was able to report that the emphasis of EAMTC had shifted 'from that of a somewhat remote Course to one which sees its roots in the local church within the region, giving an honoured and valued place to local collaboration in the training of its ministers.'⁴² The student body had further mushroomed by this time to 58, a quarter of the total for the entire Cambridge Federation.

Other developments to take place by the summer of 1996 included the validation and inspection of EAMTC as a part of the Cambridge Federation, rather than as a separate institution. EAMTC also took the initiative in pioneering 'Network East Anglia', a forum for providers of theological education throughout the region. Perhaps the most far-reaching innovation, however, as far as the future of theological education in England is concerned, was the new scheme for ministerial education of theology graduates based on the model of living in a parish whilst training through a Regional Theological Centre. A scheme was set up at Peterborough with effect from 1998 as one stage in realising this vision, which had been included in the Lincoln Report at Appendix Q as a radical and positive way

³⁹ Principal's Report, 13 September 1994, EAMTC Council file, EAMTC archives.

⁴⁰ Principal's Report, 24 January 1995, EAMTC Council file, EAMTC archives.

⁴¹ Council Minutes, 6 June 1995, EAMTC Council file, EAMTC archives.

⁴² 'Some development in EAMTC', a paper dated June 1996, EAMTC Council file, EAMTC archives.

forward. The Peterborough scheme was to consist of a small group of theology graduates living at the cathedral and exploring its worshipping life, whilst engaging in theological reflection; study and research in the companionship of a tutor.⁴³ In connection with this a new MA in Contextual Studies was developed with the University of Loughborough which was providing the basis for Higher Education in Peterborough.⁴⁴ The standing of the project is indicated by the concern expressed at EAMTC Council that some suitably qualified students could not progress through a PhD because of shortage of ABM funding.⁴⁵ Meanwhile academic validation for the main body of EAMTC teaching was transferred during 1999 from the University of East Anglia to the University of Wales, in order to improve curriculum freedom and the range of academic awards able to be offered.⁴⁶

The EAMTC Principal was appointed Archdeacon of Worcester in 1999, having led EAMTC through a process of complete transformation. All of the Regional Courses feature a high measure of dedication on the part of staff, students and governors alike, but none of the others bears witness to the effective transforming zeal of one individual in such a clear way. Growth in effectiveness in its provision of theological education must be EAMTC's principal distinguishing feature. Perhaps the final word should go to the Bishops' Inspectors who in 1999 were quoted as stating, 'we endorse the comment of the Course's ABM Moderator when he described it as "one of the training success stories of the Church of

⁴³ 'Some development in EAMTC', a paper dated June 1996, EAMTC Council file, EAMTC archives.

⁴⁴ Principal's Report, 11 June 1998, EAMTC Council file, EAMTC archives.

⁴⁵ Council Minutes, 12 November 1998, EAMTC Council file, EAMTC archives.

⁴⁶ Principal's Report, 11 March 1999, EAMTC Council file, EAMTC archives.

England.” The primary credit for the transformation which has occurred must go to the Principal who has now built up a talented team of colleagues.’⁴⁷

⁴⁷ Principals’ Final Report, September 1999, EAMTC Council file, EAMTC archives.

Chapter 11: Curriculum Issues

The purpose of this chapter is to consider certain fundamental issues concerning whether what is on offer through the Regional Courses constitutes a training which is the best possible in order to meet the needs of the Church in the years of the third Christian millennium. Of course this begs the complicated question as to what the needs of the Church really are. Traditionally the Church of England has specialised in a pastoral ministry within a society in which the facts of the Gospel were at least generally known and the propriety of churchgoing generally accepted. But today the Church of England is a contracting institution: occasional press reports have even raised the possibility of a threatened 'meltdown'. It is therefore axiomatic to this study that one of the pressing requirements of the contemporary church of England is to train future clergy who will so know their faith in breadth and depth that they will be able to teach the faith effectively, both to those within the Church so that they can grow in their own faith and also to those currently outside the Church so that they can become persuaded of the benefits of active membership of the worshipping community in the parishes. In what has been identified by others as a 'post-Christian' society, the Church must become more and more an effective proclaimer of the Gospel, rather than concentrating on the care of those who for their own reasons choose to attend.

One of the problems concerning ministerial training is that the increasing fragmentation and individualism of society, which has resulted in a shunning of institutions generally, including the Church, has had a clear influence on the world

of education, including the training of ordinands. Training has adapted to the patterns of a tide of post-Christian individualism, rather than encompassed programmes which would effectively counter it. This can be seen in the scramble within the area of higher education to tailor curricula to cater for the needs of the individual. More and more, in the church's theological education, ordinands have wished to ensure that they are able to obtain secular academic awards for their study, and to maximise those awards wherever possible. There has been an increase in emphasis on a doctrine of success in educational terms, being measured by signs of personal growth in understanding on the part of the person being trained. There has been an increase in profile of emphasis of 'politically correct' issues such as feminism and racial awareness which have found their ways into the curriculum. But there has been less emphasis on equipping ordinands with an understanding of the basics of their faith. Much has been made of the ideal of engendering a culture of learning in ordinands, but little has been done to assess whether in the context of an increasingly pressed parish life this is likely to happen.

Referring to the House of Bishops' Inspection of the Northern Ordination Course in 1984, the Principal of that Course delivered the withering criticism of the Inspectors on his retirement some four years later: 'The last inspection focussed entirely on method, with no comment on content – like a wine taster concerned only with the shape of the bottle and design of the label.'¹ After eleven years of adaptation and change on the part of NOC in order to take on board the dictums of central Church authorities, the External Examiner then commented,²

Biblical studies. There have been a number of drawbacks in having the Biblical studies modules clustered at the beginning of the course. It can lead to the impression that students have now 'done' the Bible. To some

¹ See Chapter 7, section III.

² Examiner's Report, 1995, Papers to Council file, NOC archives.

extent this has been mitigated by discussions of the Bible on theme week-ends, but it is clearly not ideal to have no formal biblical studies courses in the last two years. It does not allow students to develop their skills adequately and it tends to mean that attention is focused on learning basic critical skills (which is of course essential), leaving little time for consideration of the theological interpretation of such texts. It has also meant that there is no great connection, or indeed proximity between the Biblical Studies courses and the course on preaching and communication. Whilst students have expressed appreciation to me of the help given with communication skills, I feel strongly that this is only part of what is required in homiletics and that more attention should be given to the use of the Bible in preaching, Bible study and Christian education.

One member of staff of a Regional Course said in informal conversation, ‘We do all of the Old Testament in ten evening sessions – ridiculous isn’t it!’³ The point of these pieces of evidence is to illustrate the amount by which Biblical Studies, by way of example, can become so compressed that it becomes a minor aspect of the curriculum in practice, rather than the major subject which should undergird everything else. Going back to the NOC Principal’s criticism of their 1984 Inspection, he also said, ‘we do actually believe that “covering the ground is important”... Students on the Course will not consciously remember everything they meet, but they may subsequently remember what a certain matter was at least on the syllabus, and will be able to refresh their memories.’⁴ ACM disbelief at the time, that this conservative approach could possibly be a recipe for reputed excellence, has already been pointed out. But in the busy world of today’s ordained minister, even when the necessity for lifelong learning has been accepted, it is unlikely that what has not been covered can be applied, or that where there is no awareness of the existence of issues, those issues will subsequently be sought out.

³ Noted in the course of a visit to NOC.

⁴ See Chapter 7, section III.

The above indicates that it is at least highly relevant to look critically at the actual context of what is taught and the rest of this chapter will seek both to consider selectively such contemporary syllabus information as has been made available, and also to record some of the priorities declared by the Principals and academic staff of the various Regional Courses, under interview. Two caveats need to be recorded about the written evidence. The first is that not all Courses were willing to furnish such material, meaning that whilst examples of content can be referred to, a comprehensive overall survey has not been possible. As one individual said informally, curriculum information is Course property and not just to be given out to any Tom, Dick or Harry! The second is that, as was again said informally and is quoted as anecdotal evidence, it is the objective of some so to write the syllabus as to satisfy the validators and leave things open practically speaking, so that individual tutors can teach anything they want! Access to Ministry Division files would rectify the former situation, but not, one suspects, the latter!⁵

The East Midlands Course, whilst not supplying access to files, was happy to supply a copy of its validation documentation prepared for the Ministry Division in 2001. This Course was from its inception University-based, and it seems reasonable to assume that it would offer a syllabus holding academic credibility. The Course structure is visible from table 11/1.⁶ The Diploma in Theological and Pastoral Studies, which is the basic qualification offered, immediately indicates a very full programme, with modules equating to 240 CATS points being gained within three years of part-time study. Total study time is reckoned at 1800 hours, or

⁵ Both informal comments noted in the course of a visit to EAMTC.

⁶ Application for Validation, 2001, Vol I, p.53, EMMTC archives.

600 hours during each year of the Course.⁷ This compared with the standard degree programme of 360 CATS points rating undertaken normally through three years' full-time undergraduate study, and would therefore seem to represent a more than half-time equivalence. However, it should be noted that a feature of this curriculum is the careful inclusion, as validated areas, of those subjects which in other degrees might not have been counted as 'academic'. For instance 'Personal and Professional Development 1' appears to include the joining in with other students in small personal support groups; whilst in 'Personal and Professional Development 2' the activity of reflecting on one's own general progress is itself a validated part of the programme. If someone is doing a full-time job and also a two-thirds time academic course, it is impossible that there will be time for general reading and extended personal reflection on what is being done in the formal parts of the curriculum. It is reasonable to assume that everything should be written in. This may be contrasted with the more traditional approach taken by Theological Colleges in preparing candidates for the G.M.E. (up to 1992) in which contact time with academic staff in the shape of lectures, seminars and tutorials would have been specified, a certain amount of private study time directed towards specific essay-writing also estimated, but in the setting of an open-ended commitment to 'read round' the subject. There is an interesting comparison between the tutor contact time involved with Christian Doctrine Modules 2, 3 and 4, and the lecture-time allocated at Cranmer Hall, Durham in 1980 to cover the same topics of God, Christ, Salvation, Church and Sacraments, in preparation for the G.M.E. essay scheme. The three year part-time EMMTC students received fifty hours whilst the two year full time Cranmer

⁷ Application for Validation, 2001, Vol III, Regulations, EMMTC archive.

students experienced 81 hours.⁸ For New Testament studies the equivalent figures are forty hours and 84 hours respectively.

It will be seen in following chapters that there is general acceptance that residential colleges and Regional Courses are different in what they provide, and do not attempt to be monochrome. What, then, of the practical side of training, given that the greatest strength of the Regional Course, again as will be noted on following chapters, is said by many to be the facility offered of doing theology 'in context'. The EMMTC modules, Pastoral Studies 1, 2 and 3 are to do with practical placements, and the opportunity to learn issues of ministry in a variety of settings. A commendable total of 225 hours is included. Alongside the author's experience of approximately 680 hours of placement over a three-year period at college, this total is seen to equate to a one third ratio. But if within this placement total the parochial element is examined specifically, the relevant totals are 75 hours and 465 hours.⁹ Little wonder that if there has been any similarity between the Regional Courses, the Principal of NOC was having concerns in 1996/97 about the narrow congregational focus of the average student!¹⁰ Could it mean that the rally-call of 'theology in context' applied to the Regional Courses could mean in practice little more than, 'trying to study theology whilst desperately busy with other things'?

By contrast with EMMTC, the 1997 validation document for WEMTC does not grade all their modules in terms of CAT points. However, the different modules

⁸ Based upon handouts given to the author at the time.

⁹ The figure is based as follows:

5 hours/ week for 21 weeks of one academic year	(105 hours)
one long placement of four weeks' duration comprising about 60 hrs/wk activity	(240 hours)
one short placement of two weeks' duration comprising a similar 60 hrs/wk activity	(120 hours).

¹⁰ See chapter 7, section III

are specified according to contact hours and personal study hours, as is shown in table 11/2. The Diploma in Applied Theology as offered by WEMTC is different in structure from the EMMTC equivalent, but seems broadly to be of the same scope with regard to contact time and private study assumptions. Although the total student input specified on the structure document is only 1620 hours, compared with EMMTC's 1800 hours, to the former total must be added the content of the residential weekends, of which fourteen are listed. The total contact time for distinct New Testament Studies is a declared thirty hours, somewhat less than EMMTC, and for Doctrine about fifty hours, a direct equivalent. It may also be held that the long Residential (LR3) contains formal elements of Biblical and Doctrinal input.

The STETS Handbook details programmes for qualifications at levels 1,2 and 3. There is considerable emphasis on the individual nature of exemptions due to prior learning accreditation. But a likely programme for three years of study leading to a HE Diploma in Christian Ministry and Mission is available. Because this is a distance-learning Course, there is not a direct comparison with Courses using face to face tuition as their standard delivery. However, there is a figure of 1201 total hours of study specified for each eighteen-month section of the Course, or 2402 hours for a standard three-year overall term. This is longer than either EMMTC or WEMTC, but of course the staff contact time is very much less.

Table 11/1 Extract from EMMTC Validation document, 2001

STRUCTURE: DIPLOMA AND MA IN THEOLOGICAL AND PASTORAL STUDIES

Diploma: THEOLOGY AND CONTEXT 1	Diploma: THEOLOGY AND CONTEXT 2 MA: THEOLOGY AND CONTEXT 1	Diploma: THEOLOGY AND CONTEXT 3 MA: THEOLOGY AND CONTEXT 2
Diploma: PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT 1	Diploma: PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT 2 [Also undertaken by MA students]	Diploma: PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT 3 [Also undertaken by MA students]
Diploma: PRACTICAL THEOLOGY 1	Diploma: PRACTICAL THEOLOGY 2 MA: PRACTICAL THEOLOGY 1	Diploma: PRACTICAL THEOLOGY 3 MA: PRACTICAL THEOLOGY 2
Diploma: PASTORAL STUDIES 1	Diploma: PASTORAL STUDIES 2 MA: PASTORAL STUDIES 1	Diploma: PASTORAL STUDIES 3 MA: PASTORAL STUDIES 2
Diploma: CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE 1	Diploma: BIBLICAL STUDIES 2 MA: BIBLICAL STUDIES 1	Diploma: CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE 4 MA: CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE 3
Diploma: BIBLICAL STUDIES 1	Diploma: CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE 2 MA: CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE 1	Diploma: BIBLICAL STUDIES 4 MA: BIBLICAL STUDIES 3
Diploma: HISTORY OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH	Diploma: BIBLICAL STUDIES 3/ CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE 3 MA: BIBLICAL STUDIES 2/ CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE 2	Diploma: CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE 5 MA: CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE 4

Table 11/2 Extract from WEMTC Validation document, 1997

TABLE 1
MODULAR STRUCTURE OF THE THREE YEAR COURSE

	CONTENT	CODE	Contact Hours (Evening Classes and Residentials)	STUDY HOURS	TOTAL
YEAR ONE	Taught Module	TM101	20	70	90
	Taught Module	TM102	20	70	90
	Taught Module	TM103	20	70	90
	Placement	P1	20	70	90
	Long Residential	LR1	60	30	90
YEAR TWO	Taught Module	TM201	20	70	90
	Taught Module	TM202	20	70	90
	Taught Module	TM203	20	70	90
	Placement	P2	20	70	90
	Long Residential	LR2	60	30	90
YEAR THREE	Taught Module	TM204	20	70	90
	Taught Module	TM205	20	70	90
	Taught Module	TM206	20	70	90
	Placement	P3	20	70	90
	Long Residential	LR3	60	30	90
OVER THREE YEARS	SPIRITUAL FORMATION	S1	30	60	90
	MINISTERIAL COMPETENCES	C1	30	60	90
OPTION (One of these for example)	New Testament Greek	O1	(15)	(75)	90
	Hospital Chaplaincy	O2	(25)	(65)	
	Children's Ministry	O3	(30)	(60)	
	Hours will vary as some may be distance learning courses with tutorial support				
TOTAL					1620

The statement was made earlier in this chapter that because of lack of documentation it was not possible to produce an overall survey of the curricula of the various Courses. But through the validation documentation that is available, it becomes clear that even if the complete documentation were to be available for each Course, it would be virtually an impossible task to compare the curricula on any detailed basis. Even if the data for such factors as contact hours, private study hours and CATS credits were to be presented in standard format, the differences in makeup of individual modules when taking a fully or partially themed approach means that hours of contact time for New Testament Studies, for example, are not only debateable, but would no doubt be hotly debated if comparative attempts were made. The serious point which arises out of this is as to whether the Ministry Division of the Church of England is able in any way to judge critically a thematic curriculum in terms of relative weighting of constituent disciplines. The question may not be thought relevant to those who seek only to ensure that a certain amount of academic study at a certain recognised 'level'. But ordination training is training to do a job, and it must surely be relevant to specify, for example, a certain level of contact with formal Biblical Studies as a minimum. If the argument is made that a thematic curriculum is the equivalent of a disciplinary one, why is it admitted that Regional Courses will never produce theologians?¹¹ If the Ministry Division is in fact doing a very clear comparative assessment of curricula, why does it not require the data to be provided to make this easier? It may, of course, be admitted that individual institutions always have varied in their delivery of the content of their curricula. But one cannot help feeling that the loss of a central syllabus must make it much more difficult for critical local syllabus supervision to be implemented. Of course, since there is such confidentiality attached to the reports of the Bishops'

¹¹ See interview with NTMTC Principal.

Inspectors (unlike similar inspection reports in the general education world), it is impossible to say whether there is any critical attention at all paid to what is in the curriculum, as against how it is delivered!

The Regional Courses now offer between them the opportunity for participants who are ordination candidates to work through a variety of different tracks to a variety of different qualifications, of which the commonest are Higher Education Diploma, Bachelor's degree and Master's degree. The last is available to those with appropriate graduate standing. But the M.A. programmes on offer illustrate a further curricular issue which is also a potential serious concern. The problem is that those who complete a course leading to a Master's qualification can vary enormously in the amount of theological study they have actually done. Of course, each Master's programme is correctly validated as such, and involves the appropriate amount of study at Higher Education 'level 4'. But whilst some of the entry to Masters' programmes is limited to those already with a first degree in theology, in other cases the entry is available on a much wider basis to graduates from a wide variety of disciplines. Now whereas in general academic terms it may be perfectly appropriate to arrange the latter, signifying that a given individual has completed a body of study at Higher Education levels 1-4, the curriculum of the Regional Theological Courses is meant in the first instance to offer appropriate professional training for ordinands. It is unlikely that those training to be doctors or solicitors would be offered significant exemptions on the basis of a theology degree, but the reverse is certainly possible. It is possible that this could give a very misleading impression of what a particular individual's qualifications might signify in terms of both knowledge and aptitude.

To illustrate the above point, it is possible to compare the EAMTC Peterborough Project and the EMMTC Master's degree general programme. The current EMMTC handbook states helpfully:¹²

The EAMTC Peterborough Project has come to birth from the meeting of two visions:

- The vision of the East Anglian Ministerial Training Course (EAMTC) to create an ecumenical opportunity for ordinands of any age, with degrees in theology, to pursue integrated study and learning as part of a small pioneering community which engages theologically with its local context.
- The vision of the Dean and Chapter of Peterborough, building upon its Celtic and Benedictine foundations, to see the Cathedral fulfil its role as a centre of teaching, learning and study for a new generation in the city.

Clearly it is intended that in the case of a Peterborough Project MA graduate, the qualification will signify the experience of effectively engaging in applied theology in an advanced way, on the basis of a corpus of theological learning at graduate level which has already been accumulated.

By contrast with the above, the EMMTC MA programme does not demand a first degree in theology for normal entry. The following extracts from validation documentation are clear and self-explanatory:¹³

As we have explained earlier candidates for ordination enter the first year of the Course as students within the Diploma programme. Students may continue on this programme for the whole three years of their ministerial training. At the end of these three years these students will normally be presented to the University for consideration for the award of the Diploma in Theological and Pastoral Studies of the University of Nottingham.

Normally at the end of the first year in training students who are suitably qualified may be considered for entry into the two-year M.A. programme. Students who enter this programme will normally be presented to the University for the award of the degree of Master of Arts in Theological and Pastoral Studies of the University of Nottingham.

¹² 'The East Anglian Ministerial Course', 1982, p.55. EAMTC archives.

¹³ Application for Validation, 2001, volume I, p. 56, EAMTC archives.

It might be helpful here to comment on the relationship between the Diploma and the MA programmes.

It is normally the case that students enter the first year of their training with EMMTC as students on the three year Diploma programme. Normally, they may apply for entrance to the MA programme as they enter the second year of training with us.

Students on the Diploma programme and the MA programme undertake their taught modules together. The work of these students on these taught modules is differentiated by the assignments set for them; the assignments set for the MA students are always of a much more technical and demanding character and level than those set for the Diploma students.

It is evident that M.A. candidates in this situation engage in precisely the same face to face contact with academic staff for taught courses as do Diploma candidates. Indeed in each individual part of the course the two are in practice one group. The diagram at table 11/1 does not show Diploma and Master's courses together because they have a similar pattern. It shows them together because they are the same course! Reading lists are the same. The difference in assessments consists of longer pieces of written work: typically 2500 words instead of 2000 words for an essay seems to be demanded and a dissertation has also to be completed. But it is hard to see how this particular degree differs from what would elsewhere be a first degree in theology for many of the candidates. It is also difficult to discern how the identical input can be defined as level 2 for one purpose and level 4 for another. But it does make it easier to understand how one year group could be studying for an M.A. without realising it! Referring again to the hours previously quoted for EMMTC teaching contact time, it would seem that this Course is producing some Masters of Arts in Theological and Pastoral Studies who have had considerably less contact time, in the context of a taught course, with their lecturers and tutors than used to be the case for many of those seeking merely to 'get through' the G.M.E. essay scheme. It may be that the ACCM22 decision to require individual academic

institutions to define appropriate training for ministry was intended to release creative thought and initiative rather than bolster up a monochrome central syllabus. But the price in terms of discrepancy between and divergence of professional qualifications has been enormous.

It should be emphasised that the reason that EMMTC can be cited this way, in analysing their curriculum, is the exceptionally clear and logical way in which their validation documentation is laid out. In the light of the anecdotal comment (not relating to EMMTC) that one Course's documentation is so written that in practice its tutors can teach what they want, it may well be that other curriculum issues would warrant a certain amount of critical attention, if they could be accurately identified!

The Particular Issue of Mission

In the course of interviewing Principals, to which much reference has already been made in Chapter 5, some questions were asked about the curriculum and especially the areas of Biblical Studies and Missiology. Curriculum paperwork has been used above as a basis for comment on what within traditional theological disciplines the Regional Courses are not doing – including reference to Biblical Studies. In the relatively new area of Missiology, when treated as a discrete discipline, the Principals had distinctive evidence to offer about their present mode of implementation, and policy with regard to interpretation of the present requirements.

Without getting involved in a complex theological debate as to the true nature of Christian 'mission', it is important to note that there are significant differences within the Church of England over the basic appropriate emphasis of

missiology. Most would agree that mission is more than evangelism and relates to the whole of the Church's proper Godly activity towards the world. But there is then a divergence between those who believe that the two are essentially connected within the working out of the Gospel, and those who believe that evangelism is a subset of mission in the sense that it represents just one aspect of mission which may or may not be appropriate in given circumstances. Although the Church's new framework of validation for theological training is entitled (Church of England individual titles) 'Mission and Ministry', it cannot be interpreted as intending that the Church of England now expects its ministers to be trained to encourage church growth. Nevertheless in an era when the Church of England is experiencing a steady decline in membership, it should be at least illuminating to survey whether the Regional Courses attach priority to equipping their ordinands to address arguably the most serious general practical and spiritual issue affecting the Church as an institution today.

NEOC¹⁴ believes that 'evangelism is a subset of mission and that the essence of mission is about the way as Christians we inhabit our own cultures'. Mission, based on cultural understanding, is valued as a major component of the NEOC curriculum, but it was emphasised that this was not the same either as missiology or evangelism. 'Elective workshops' are offered in evangelism but are not compulsory. 'Mission is about self-understanding, culturally, historically, geographically and theologically. It's about the place of the Church in the wider world and in the culture, and that's the general understanding we seek to develop with students.'

¹⁴ Interview with Principal, transcript pp.6-8.

Although WEMTC describes its weekend “R5” as ‘Mission and Modernity’, and includes in that one session on evangelism, the indication in discussion was again that evangelism was not the subject of any strong emphasis. The impression was given that evangelism was not undertaken as a practical activity on the Course, or as an individual activity, but came within more general sessions on ‘mission’. ‘Students with an old-fashioned Evangelical stance are encouraged to engage in evangelism, but it has to be an opportunity they discover, rather than being part of the Course curriculum’. The Principal considered general Church background as either ‘Evangelical’, or ‘High Church’, or ‘Broad Church’, and believed that the insight of the last two was much more likely to be that Christianity is to be shared through permeation in various situations, rather than through evangelistic campaigns as such.¹⁵

A broadly similar viewpoint was expressed by NTMTC,¹⁶ whose major theme in its validation submission was said to be Mission, understood in terms of God’s Kingdom and God’s rule. The intention was to understand what it means to be servants of God in the world, exercising God’s mission. Evangelism is not excluded from the curriculum, but the Course certainly does not focus on evangelism as the main theme of mission.

SWMTC¹⁷ acknowledges the importance of mission and would argue that their third year weekend programme is mission-focussed, but not on a basis of studying ‘Missiology’, rather through addressing ‘boundary questions’ concerning God and the world (i.e. interfaith matters, suffering, authority, forgiveness,

¹⁵ Interview with Principal, notes p.2.

¹⁶ Interview with Principal, transcript, p.14.

¹⁷ Interview with Principal, transcript, pp.12-14.

reconciliation, healing etc.). This programme is focussed on home church analysis. There is no practical training in any aspect of mission available on the course, and it is acknowledged that home church experience, around which much of the Course revolves, is not likely to include the practice of mission and evangelism.

NOC¹⁸ was rather more positive in its profile of evangelism as a part of mission, and was planning to increase its emphasis on missiology, which was in general terms described as a 'golden thread' running through the whole curriculum on a developing basis. To the then current¹⁹ module covering both theological and pastoral approaches to the Church's engagement with the world, evangelism and religious pluralism, it was planned to add an eight day residential concentrating on communication, preaching and evangelism in the context of general mission and pluralism issues.

EAMTC²⁰ made positive mention of evangelism in connection with the biennial summer school 'Sacraments and Missiology' which forms a part of their syllabus for pastoral practice. EMMTC²¹ was keen to assert that 'a very big picture of mission, deriving it from the doctrine of the nature of God ... which then expresses itself into all manner of activities in the Church, included within which there is the issue of evangelism... where you are in incarnating the wide language of mission in terms of the practice of the Church'. A high emphasis was placed on an understanding of the different contexts in which evangelism might be pursued, particularly the different expressions of the Christian faith, people of many different faiths, and people with no faith whatever.

¹⁸ Interview with Principal, notes, pp.3-4.

¹⁹ January 2001.

²⁰ Interview with Principal, notes, p.9.

²¹ Interview with Principal, transcript, p.12.

WMMTC²² placed particular emphasis on training students to relate mission to context. Mission is understood in the manner of Bosch, i.e. sharing in God's mission rather than the Church itself doing the mission. Contextual studies were said to centre around an analysis of the mission strategy of the student's home church. CBDTI²³ described a wish to develop an input into the whole area of mission and evangelism and build upon the then present provision of a weekend centring on the theology and practice of mission. But the inclusion of a traditional 'mission' as an experience for students whilst on the Course was said to be impossible due to pressures of time.

SAOMC²⁴ described their third year students' summer residential programme as being the most significant curriculum area concentrating on mission – the last programme element for any SAOMC student before ordination. But Biblical Studies was also said to be mission-orientated. Modules about social context, culture and interfaith matters were all described as relevant. SAOMC also, as part of their training in preaching, include 'preaching for a decision' as part of their practical training. Although only a single event, the inclusion of this element is the nearest any of the Courses came to ownership of training in any techniques of evangelism.

SEITE²⁵ described their 1st-year 'Mission Project'. Students are grouped together in small groups of five to six and have to complete a task of explaining to a typical parish group what is the nature of mission, using a multi-media process.

²² Interview with Principal, transcript, p.7-8.

²³ Interview with Principal, notes, p.6.

²⁴ Interview with Principal, transcript, pp.6-7.

²⁵ Interview with Assistant Principal, transcript, pp.9-10.

This was said to involve a great deal of time and effort as students came to an idea of the nature of both mission and evangelism, in order to explain that to others.

Finally, although not discussed at interview, it should be mentioned that STETS centres many of its distance-learning modules around the concept of mission. Mission on the Course overall is understood in the broad sense of participation in the life of God, but included in Module 'H3-Sharing God' is a unit specifically on Evangelism with the following very specific stated learning outcomes:

By the end of this unit you should

- Know some of the ways the early church evangelised, their goals in making disciples, and how this flowed from their knowledge of God as revealed in Jesus Christ;
- Be able to identify some of the theological differences between evangelism seen as sharing the life of God / initiation of the kingdom of God, and evangelism as saving souls;
- Understand the theological contexts of some different perspectives on evangelism that have occurred over the years in different parts of the world, and be able to identify some of their resulting strengths and weaknesses;
- Be able to articulate your own theology of evangelism, and interpret this for your local church as it approaches evangelism.

It is evident from these responses that the idea of mission is taken seriously by the Regional Courses and that mission forms a part of each of the curricula. In the case of SWMTC mission could be described as implicit rather than explicit. The most common way of introducing the idea of mission seems to be to describe mission as a participation in the life of God in a local context. Evangelism is treated as an aspect of mission but not necessarily as an essential element, and even where this is the case, there is no core training in active aspects of it, unless a candidate's home church or placement church happens to have a programme of evangelism in place. The only minor exception to this is the single task of 'preaching for a

decision' of SAOMC. As to an understanding of the wider topic of mission, it is likely that ideas encountered by students on the Courses will be able to inform their subsequent ministry. But in the case of practical evangelism, any such informing has to be done by individual churches in which evangelism happens to have been met. The Regional Courses believe they specialise in doing theology in the local context, but they fail to offer training in what is arguably the most important local application of theology – explaining to people the implications of the Gospel in order to encourage them to turn to Christ. This could be regarded as a serious, even critical omission, given the current state of the Church.

The evidence of this chapter overall is that the Regional Courses offer less training than the Colleges in the practical application of the Gospel in people's lives and less opportunity to grasp the essentials of the Gospel, in terms of Biblical Study and Christian doctrine. Although the courses they offer are validated academically by various institutions as having the content necessary for the award of, for instance, a Higher Education Diploma, this is not the same as saying that they offer the best training that the Church in its overall historical experience has been able to formulate. One Bishop responded on his survey form that 'residential training enables more in-depth focus on everything'.²⁶ This is kinder than saying that Regional Courses deliver less focus on everything, but in this chapter's indices, that is certainly true. Yet that is not to say that the training offered by Regional Courses is not appropriate for ordination training: it is just by its nature less thorough. Perhaps one answer would be to recognise this more explicitly when arranging subsequent ministry for the people concerned. But one great difficulty in attempting to match individuals to the ministerial requirements of posts in different settings

²⁶ Carlisle.

would be the very wide divergence, for similarly named qualifications, in what has actually been studied.

Chapter 12: Survey of the Opinions of Bishops about the Courses

The Regional Theological Courses have grown up in response to the expressed needs of the Church of England and as a product of the combined energies in each case of their staffs and Councils. Everywhere there is evidence of both enthusiasm and extreme dedication on the part of Principals and their staffs. At the same time, in spite of the opinions of some, there are clear differences in the pattern of training offered between Courses and the more traditional Colleges. The preceding chapters have shown that the development of the Courses has been in no sense monochrome – they differ widely in their styles of delivery and detail content. Many would want to assert also that the Colleges also differ between themselves in terms both of what they teach and how they teach it. Nevertheless there are sufficient similarities on the one hand between all the Courses and on the other between all the Colleges for some generic comparisons to be both valid and valuable. In most dioceses today, a proportion of the ordinands face real choices between the two modes of training. Decisions about training issues which affect the future need to be informed about performance in the past and present if they are to represent more than alternative but untested theories.

One means of inquiring into such performance issues in Courses has been to collate information gained from widespread consultation with Diocesan Bishops, supervising clergy, and past Course students themselves. The objective of this has been to assess to what extent issues highlighted by particular individuals when interviewed, and in the process of researching the history and practice of the

Courses, are held to be of concern in the wider church. Some have commented that the questions asked in each case are too simplistic and not cognizant of the complexity of the issues involved. But if, as is the case, simple assertions concerning the Courses are being made in the Church, to test these, by asking simple questions on a wide basis, is an appropriate method of ascertaining which areas may be worthy of further analysis and evaluation.

The text of the questionnaire to Diocesan Bishops is printed below. It has been commonly said that in the Church of England there are forty-three ways of doing everything. The objective of making inquiry of the Bishops was to discover whether or not there are any common views at diocesan level concerning Course training, either drawn from experience of results or which may direct policy in respect of choices available to those embarking on training. In all analyses, grid scale marks to the right of centre are treated as positive (+) and those to the left as negative (-).

Regional Theological Course Survey.
Dept. of Theology, Durham. July 2001

Name:

Diocese:

1. Which of the Regional Courses do you recognise in connection with the training of your candidates for Stipendiary and/or Non-Stipendiary Ministry?

2. Does your diocese recognise any difference in kind between ordination training on Courses and at Colleges?

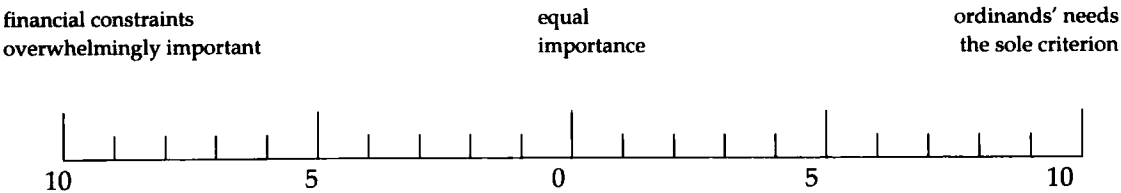
3. If so, what are the principal advantages of Course training recognised by yourself on behalf of your ordinands?

4. What are the corresponding principal disadvantages?

5. Do you differentiate between candidates intending Stipendiary ministry as against Non-Stipendiary ministry when recommending a mode of training?

6. Could you describe any change in your policy in recent years over allocation to Courses of candidates intending Stipendiary ministry?

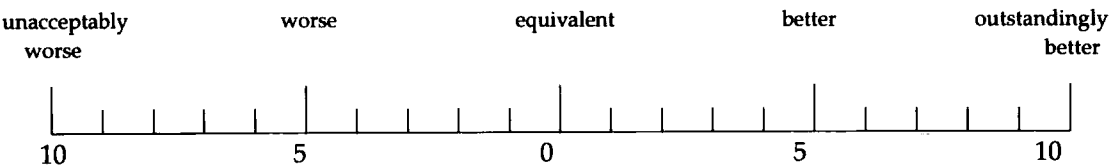
7. Could you indicate the relative importance of candidates' needs as against financial constraints in pointing ordinands to a particular mode of training?



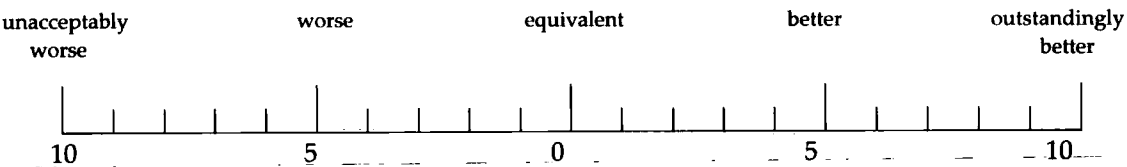
(please mark with a cross at the relevant point)

8. How would you rate Course training relative to College in the following curriculum areas:

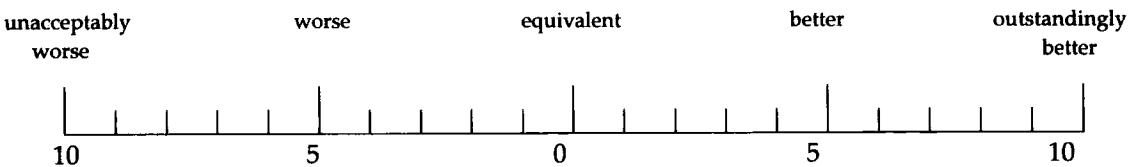
a) In-depth knowledge of the Bible:



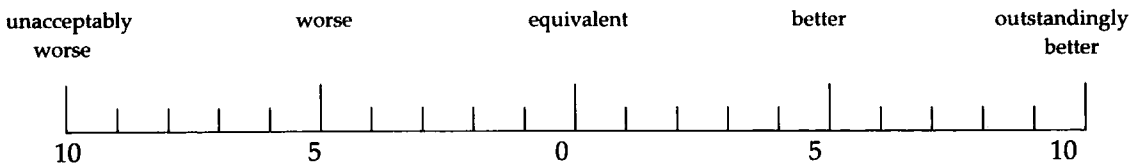
b) Training in Mission awareness and skills:



c) Personal growth in the life of prayer:



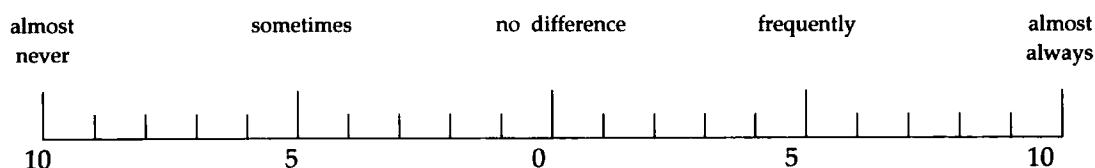
d) General academic theology:



9. Does your P.O.T programme recognise the differing needs of those trained on Course compared with those trained at Colleges?

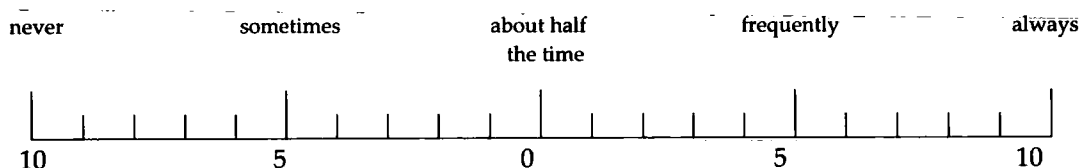
If so in what ways?

10. In your experience of all clergy failing to reach their full potential post-ordination, to what extent are these likely to have trained on Courses?

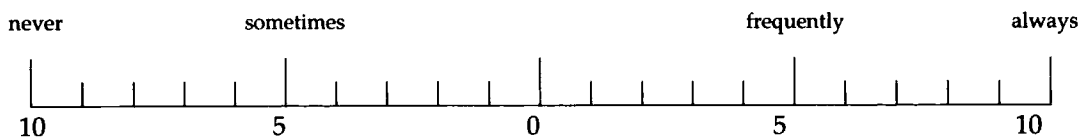


It would be especially helpful if you could provide overleaf (and anonymously) brief details of any case of significant failure which you attribute either a) to factors relating to the individual's having trained on a Course, or b) to factors which would have been alleviated had the individual trained on a Course.

11. In making an appointment in your diocese, is mode of training ever a consideration in assessing suitability for a particular post?

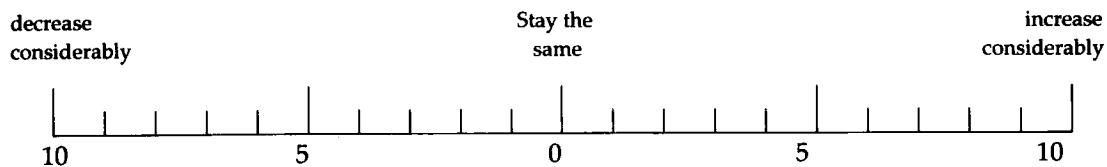


12. Would you consider training on Courses as adequate preparation for posts of senior responsibility within the Church?



13. Neglecting financial constraints, how should the profile of Courses in ordination training change over the next 25 years?

either a)



or b)

be entirely related to ordinands needs irrespective of the overall profile.

14. Could you describe any additional issues which are current in your diocese or thought important by yourself with regard to ordination training on Courses. In your opinion are these issues being adequately considered by the Church as a whole?

15. Would you welcome a taped discussion centring on any of the issues raised in any of the above questions?

Thank you very much for your help.

Out of a total of forty-three (i.e. excluding the diocese of Europe) questionnaires circulated, thirty-one were returned. This represents a response rate of 72%. Thanks are due to the following Diocesan Bishops who either responded personally or endorsed a reply by their Diocesan Director of Ordinands or other representative on their behalf:

Birmingham	Manchester
Bristol	Newcastle
Carlisle *	Norwich
Chelmsford	Ripon and Leeds *
Chester *	St. Albans
Coventry	St. Edmundsbury and Ipswich *
Derby *	Salisbury
Durham *	Sheffield
Ely	Southwark
Exeter	Southwell
Gloucester	Truro *
Guildford *	Wakefield
Hereford *	Winchester *
Leicester	Worcester *
Lichfield	York
Liverpool	

* denotes Diocesan Bishop's
personal completion of
questionnaire

No response was received from the following:

Bath and Wells	London
Blackburn	Oxford
Bradford	Peterborough
Canterbury	Portsmouth
Chichester *	Rochester
Lincoln	Sodor and Man

* The Bishop of Chichester declared a conflict of interest with the then current Working Party on the Structure and Funding of Ordination Training. The writer is also Assistant Director of Ordinands in the same diocese.

A summary of the exact answers recorded in response to the questionnaire accompanies the thesis, and what follows is therefore a distillation and interpretation of the evidence gathered.

Although responses were only received from thirty-one of the forty-three dioceses approached, contained in that sample was at least one response from a principal user of each of the twelve Regional Courses. It can fairly be asserted, therefore, that coverage of the Courses in the answers is at least reasonably representative.

One of the basic areas of appraisal investigated by the questionnaire was the issue as to whether the Courses are held to offer fundamentally the same type of training as traditional Colleges, with perhaps relatively unimportant differences in weighting and delivery of the curriculum, or about whether the training offers a very different route indeed from the traditional pattern, with great dissimilarities. In answer to question 2 concerning possible difference in kind between Course and College routes, in fact thirteen dioceses returned a straight 'no' answer. By contrast, twelve believe that there is a difference 'in kind' between the two, whilst six gave a more qualified answer, one important general point asserted being that there are substantial differences between Courses in what they offer, as between colleges. This answer would indicate a position in the Church of England whereby opinion and experience is currently very divided on the issue, with further investigation being essential.

A natural corollary of the above question should be the issue addressed in question 11, i.e. whether in each diocese the mode of training is ever a consideration in assessing suitability for particular posts. Here no fewer than eighteen dioceses answered in the region of 9 – 10 of the 'never' end of the scale, indicating that mode of training is for them virtually never an issue in making most appointments. Of those thirteen dioceses which recognised no difference in kind between Course and College training, not surprisingly all but one of those which

felt able to answer question 11 came within this category. Seven dioceses did not answer the question in the set terms, whilst for three the mode of training was 'sometimes' an issue (score 5), and for three it was an issue at score 7, 7.5 or 8.5, i.e. between 'sometimes' and 'never.' The major issue that therefore arises out of question 11, is why half the dioceses who believe that there is a difference in kind between Course and College training then go on not to take this account when making appointments.

The answer to question 12 concerning the adequacy of Courses for preparation for posts of senior responsibility was in marked contrast to question 11. Twenty-five answers were received under the terms of the question, but only three could answer 'always'. The most common answer was 'frequently' (11 responses). Four were more confident than 'frequently' but two thought only 'about half of the time' and four only 'sometimes'. The linear average score of respondents was 3.4 in the direction of 'frequently'. This compares with the average of 8.9 in the direction of 'never' in the case of question 11. The obvious conclusion is that whilst most dioceses think that Course training is perfectly adequate for the average Curate or Incumbent, there is a great deal more hesitation in accepting the idea of a Course-trained Bishop or Archdeacon. A logical implication of this may be that there is widespread acceptance of a position that details of training do not matter too much for the average Incumbent. Should this be the case, the fact that the average Incumbent is at the moment seeing a progressive reduction in his congregation should at the very least invite reassessment of this premise. However in the context of this survey, what the answers reveal is that in the minds of respondents there are clear differences between the Course and College modes of training.

Question 8 invited a direct comparison between Course and College training over selected essential outcomes of initial theological education. Of the 31 respondents, five did not feel able to make such a comparison. Of the remaining 26 responses the following table summarises the results:

Table 12/1: Rating of Course Training relative to College Training by Bishops

	Curriculum Area	Total No. of Responses	Average Rating	No. of Respondents Reporting Equivalence	Respondents Reporting 'Worse'		Respondents Reporting 'Better'	
					No.	Average Rating	No.	Average Rating
8a	In depth knowledge of the Bible	26	-1.6	8	16	-3.0	2	2.75
8b	Training in Mission awareness and skills	26	+1.1	7	6	-2.75	13	3.5
8c	Personal growth in the life of prayer	26	-0.4	13	8	-2.9	5	2.4
8d	General academic theology	26	-1.9	5	17	-3.2	4	1.5

The results do not show prejudice against Courses, but rather, an appreciation of strengths and weaknesses. The major concern is the obvious weight of opinion concerning the inferiority of Courses in the traditional academic areas of Biblical Studies and Theology. This is understandable considering the reduced contact time available on Courses in curriculum areas where arguably expertise is developed in direct relationship to the numbers of detail subject areas able to be treated in depth. Probably it also explains the general reluctance wholeheartedly to endure Course training as an adequate preparation for posts of senior responsibility within the church. It would be hard, for instance, to reconcile a relatively lightweight Biblical knowledge and theological adeptness with the teaching office of a Bishop.

The general perception of equivalence over growth in the life of prayer in the analysis probably takes into account on the one hand that Courses are less able to immerse students in traditional patterns of prayer, for instance the daily office, but that on the other hand the ability simply to survive the typically pressurised personal pattern of life on a Course demands the establishment of effective prayer patterns which relate to and can take place within the practical schedule of daily routine 'in the real world'. The continuing engagement with everyday life during Course training is probably a significant reason behind the contrasting confidence of the respondents about the Courses' ability to provide better training in Mission awareness and skills than the Colleges. This answer demands further research. The Church of England is currently a Church steadily reducing in membership overall, yet with many individual churches within the whole experiencing definite growth. If it could be established that Course-trained individuals, in spite of having less Biblical and theological knowledge, are better placed to promote growth in the Kingdom of God, however defined, that could prove a central argument in the continuing discussions about future training patterns.

If the above answers to question 8 indicate awareness of differences in outcomes between Course and College training, the answers to question 9 about Post-ordination Training (now known as Continuing Ministerial Education, years 1 – 4) indicate the need for urgent action and an improvement of the general situation. Seventeen respondents reported no recognition of the differing needs of Course-trained individuals. Of those remaining, most were able to recognise such needs only in so far as diocesan programmes attempt to treat all the recently ordained as individuals for such purposes. It is strongly recommended that the Church should

take account of the specific strengths and weaknesses of learning outcomes of Course training when planning continuing training after ordination.

There were many detailed responses given to questions 3 and 4, about the general advantages and disadvantages recognised in Course training. The principal practical advantage cited was the obvious one of there being no need to disrupt family life during training, particularly spouses' employment and children's education. This is of clear relevance to those intending Non-stipendiary ministry but for others the picture is less clear. One diocese made the important point that time constraints on families can be as disruptive as house moves, whilst another observed that Colleges have a better awareness of candidates' family situations (and are therefore better placed to pick up possible problems in this area.) The further comment was made that the personal 'cost' of ordination in terms of mobility and change was less evident for Course candidates. In practical terms this can make the transition to a stipendiary pattern of ministry (with its required deployability and likely reduction in income) harder to cope with.

The other significant area of advantage cited for the Courses can be summed up in the word 'contextualisation'. It was generally felt to be an advantage to be able to reflect on theological studies in the context of everyday life and work, rather than in what has been called the 'rarified atmosphere' of a theological College. Once again, however there were counter-indications also cited. The Course offers less contact with peers, reflection with whom could be held to be especially valuable. Isolation in one's own parish can also mitigate against reflection and therefore proper self-discovery. Engagement with the real world there might be, but pressures of time can mean that this is not exploited in any systematic way.

Breadth of ecclesiological tradition was also cited as an advantage of Course training, including the ecumenical dimension. Interestingly, although one respondent said that the ecumenical aspect could water down the Anglican perspective, none of the diocesan responses raised the lack of training within individual Anglican traditions as being a corresponding disadvantage.

The greatest disadvantage associated with Course training was cited as the pressure of time, both in terms of the varying demands on the lives of students and of academic contact. In the lives of students, pressures of time can result in high levels of personal stress and lack of personal space for theological reflection and the development of disciplines in prayer adequate to sustain ministry. But notably and by contrast, one bishop thought that this experience in itself constituted good preparation for the mixed demands of parish ministry. Time pressures on the curriculum could be summed up by the comment 'Residential training enables more in depth focus on everything'. In relation to this, the relative isolation of students from academic staff was also felt by some to be important. Against this, Courses were however felt to be better at engendering the personal qualities of realism, tenacity and openness to collaborative ministry.

The quality of teaching staff on Courses was a clear issue for a minority of respondents. One praised the adult education skills of staff on one Course, whilst a second had a diametrically opposed opinion about staff on another. One rather enigmatic comment was received, namely 'Local training by local people can be seen as less professional than training away from home by professional lecturers at College'.

Question 5 on the questionnaire was intended to identify any policies relating Course and College training to Stipendiary and Non-Stipendiary ministry

which may exist outside the Bishops' Regulations. Very few of those intending Non-stipendiary ministry were reported as training at Colleges. But among those intending Stipendiary ministry, there was a clear division between those dioceses which do not differentiate between Courses and Colleges and those which steer their candidates towards (or insist upon) the College option. The latter, from the answers given, seem to number ten in all, or about one third of the total respondents. Mentioned as relevant were such issues as 'potential', the 'academically more able' and 'according to merits'. A smaller number of dioceses, four in all, emphasised the freedom of choice given to the relevant candidates. From question 6, it was evident that in the main there have been no deliberate changes in policy over choice in recent years, although two dioceses reported that they were now more likely to recommend Courses to their Stipendiary candidates and five more indicated that for various reasons more of their candidates were opting for them. One diocese reported the rescinding of a previous policy which had insisted on College training for Stipendiaries.

Although training fees are a central church cost, the overall budget required from each diocese can vary widely between candidates for personal and family maintenance. Question 7 sought to assess the extent to which costs might form a part of decisions about training modes. No one owned costs as being the priority, but three dioceses put them on an equal level with the needs of the candidate. By contrast five dioceses placed candidates' needs as being the sole criterion. the average weighty for 29 dioceses answering the question directly was 6.3 / 10 in the direction of ordinands' needs being the sole criterion. This perhaps indicates a healthy general situation of training costs being considered for ordinands, but never being the primary factor for decision making.

Question 10 concerning failing clergy was inconclusive statistically, as the majority of dioceses could not differentiate between Course and College training in this respect. However, a number of individual comments deserve tabling as perhaps evidence from that minority of dioceses whose circumstances have permitted the development of some opinion in this area:

- a difficult marital situation which only emerged after ordination... might well have emerged in a residential college.
- In general, families seem to come to title situations with a greater degree of preparedness from colleges than from the regional course.
- Courses tend to be better at understanding the demands of ministry and are able (or more willing) to sound an alarm before things run too close to ordination.
- Cases of failure among early ordained (Course trained) candidates revolve around inflexibility in the ministry being exercised i.e. very much on their own terms and lacking a sacrificial element.
- non stipendiary ministers are by no means always stretched, rarely in my experience have been found to be gravely inadequate.

Taking all the above factors into consideration, nine dioceses thought that the future profile of Courses in ordination training (question 13) should be entirely related to the needs of ordinands. By comparison, nineteen indicated that a policy consideration of the profile of Courses would be appropriate. Of these, one thought that there should be no increase in Courses, one thought that the profile should 'increase considerably', and overall there was an average weighting of 4.8 / 10 in that direction. The terms of the question excluded financial considerations, and indicate a clear opinion that the Regional Courses have not yet achieved their proper profile in the service of the Church. The Archbishop of York indicated his wish instead to explore new patterns of training.

The final substantive question on the questionnaire, 14, was intended to explore additional issues concerning Regional Courses felt to be important by the respondents. Twenty had important points to raise and these are repeated here as received.

Birmingham

1. All the candidates training on courses, train ecumenically. For the future of the unity of the church, to train ecumenically has many advantages. However it is important to have a clear sense of Anglican identity for priestly ministry.
2. Training within a particular context can be very important.- Black and Asian candidates can gain from being alongside other black and Asian candidates, in a multi racial community. Here in the W. Midlands, both the W.M.M.T.C. and Queen's offers that context, not all theological colleges and courses are able to.

Bristol

The small and erratic size of some Courses makes them financially unstable and affects their ability to attract good-calibre staff. It also means they find it difficult to meet the academic and pastoral needs of individuals. My impression is that, only a few years ago, the opinion was being expressed that Courses were the coming thing, and the days of the residential College were numbered. It is a long time since I heard that opinion expressed. While Courses can do a great deal of good, and are the only option for some candidates, they can still be seen as a substitute for the more substantial and holistic experience of the residential College.

Carlisle

1. Money is wasted on Min Div panels. Much more trust should be given to bishops to make decisions about particular candidates. But I believe in initial selection conferences. No this issue is not adequately considered.
2. CBDTI has the problem of those who formerly trained as readers repeating courses if they subsequently train for ordination.

Chelmsford

There is a perception that Courses model Collaborative ministry very much more effectively than Colleges.

Colleges seem to perpetuate 'clericalism' in a way that Courses do not. A key area of Concern has been 'spiritual formation' but it is Considered that the Courses have clearly worked hard to address this.

Chester

I suspect that over the next 25 years we shall find *fewer* institutions, offering more *flexible* patterns of training – probably combining, in some sense, Colleges + Courses.

Derby

We value the place of the principal of EMMTC in our Council for the Development of Ministry and a staff member of NOC is an elected member of our Bishop's Council. The resulting networking, inter-action and mutual confidence generate a mutually beneficial training environment as many of the ordinands will return to titles in the diocese.

Durham

OLM is not mentioned in this questionnaire. We are seriously exploring OLM and, in preparation, have had a significant conference (residential – 3 days) on 'The nature of priesthood' in which questions of formation were discussed. Further details of this + its outcomes are available from Canon Adrian Dorber, Director of Ministry.

Hereford

Course training is seriously thin in some areas, and the limited time is sometimes devoted to fashionable topics (e.g. 'personal development') of questionable value in relation to biblical / historical studies: and sometimes to pastoral matters which have traditionally been handled by training incumbents.

Leicester

My concern is touched on in question 4. I am not convinced that courses make sufficient distinction in the ministerial formation between SM and NSM candidates. Whilst recognising the similarities the distinctiveness of NSM, especially those in secular employment, is being blurred. This is leading to a rush of candidates wishing to transfer from NSM to SM both during and shortly after training. This has serious financial implications for the church nationally and is in danger of signalling that one category of ministry is more important than another. This is not a view I would wish to encourage even unwittingly. Do courses, therefore, give sufficient contextual training for the different categories? Does training on courses give some candidates unreal expectations? Does it prevent some candidates engaging with the wider world in a unique and distinctive way as first conceived for NSMs, which have been described as being like "Heineken" reaching the parts that other ministries cannot.

The blurred edge created by training SM and NSM candidates together has ongoing implications for POT. Differences between NSM and SMs need to be recognised and valued during POT so that appropriate training, resources and support can be offered to each so that each is equipped for the ministry they have been called to. There is a pastoral danger in not addressing the unique and particular issues relevant to each category and can lead to frustration, isolation and disappointment.

Liverpool

Nothing particularly applying to courses, though there is the danger of all forms of training being driven by matters of finance – or the lack of it.

Manchester

Formation on Courses (and in Colleges) still needs to be more definite. Our diocesan OLM Scheme is amongst the best at this – in general!

Norwich

There is a continuing question of the Course's ability to accept, work with & even appropriately strengthen the more robustly distinctive forms of churchmanship & theological tradition, arising from the centripetal tendency of residential periods of limited length, especially in a region such as this where weekly tutorials are mostly undertaken individually or in groups of not more than 2 or 3.

There is currently an issue in this diocese about the regional Course's preparation of candidates for title parish interviews, following on the question whether they are too much encouraged to pursue their own needs rather than seeing themselves as entering a training situation in service of the needs of the parish. It should be stressed that this is no more than a question, currently uninvestigated; but if there is truth in it, it could be profitable to examine whether there is a link with the Courses' proven strength in person-centred educational methods.

Ripon & Leeds

We have been pleased with the training provided by courses, as with that of colleges. You might like to speak to Canon Perry Driver who would have more detailed and informed views as our DDO.

St Albans

On the whole courses are unlikely to furnish the next generation of theological teachers unless they are either candidates who already have a theological qualification or a qualification in an area that makes up part of the ordination training curriculum (e.g. sociology)

Courses have become more flexible over the course of time but still find some difficulty in accommodating candidates with substantial theological training.

Sheffield

- The place of OLM training and Courses is one we are beginning to explore.
- The need to ensure that female married ordinands are not marginalised because they tend to be on Courses rather than in residential environments.
- Attention to ordination formation and resources availability. Should Course candidates be expected to spend a short period in residential college prior to ordination e.g. of sabbatical length (3 months)?

- Exposure of 'Course' ordinands to the international church. In Colleges there are often overseas folk. Again a residential period might help.

Southwark

Staffing needs on courses & the amount of travelling for staff seems very important.

Southwell

- We have recognised a greater propensity for candidates trained on courses to try to Mould Ministry in their own image. This is an issue about NSM ministers who carry a 'volunteer' mindset and can tend to lay conditions upon their ministry and see themselves less 'under authority'. But there are also plenty of stipendiaries like this.
- Course training is still regarded as a 'lesser' option in many quarters. The quality of training on offer can be affected by the quality of candidates. We believe that courses do not adequately prepare candidates for the distinction between stipendiary + NSM, and do not focus enough on preparation for stipendiary ministry.

Truro

Greater lay involvement in training as in OLM Training

Winchester

I suspect that most Courses are even less careful, than are most Colleges, either to assist their students really to understand the range of opinion, conviction and experience in the Church of England for, against and around the ordination of women to the priesthood; or around the range of liturgical provision currently authorised for use within the Church of England.

I am concerned, too, by the substantiated stories that I constantly hear, about the small extent to which candidates' gifts and experience are really taken into account and used in ordination training, and perhaps particularly on Courses.

Faced (as, thank God, I often am) with a really gifted candidate, whether in terms of Christian experience, or character/personality, or intellect, or some mix of the three, I should tend at present to think that she or he would be better catered for, cared for, disciplined and stimulated in almost any College, than in a Course; but I do not know whether this anxiety is appropriate.

York

One approach which to some extent seeks to set a new agenda is mixed mode training. Another is greater use of Cathedral resources in theological training.

The response from the dioceses concerning the Regional Courses is one of overall confidence in their developing rôle. There is a clear observation of differences between the training they offer and that of the Colleges. But there is also an awareness of many diverse issues to be resolved and a failure to build upon both their strengths and weaknesses in any planned way in the early stages of Continuing Ministerial Education.

Chapter 13: Survey of Opinions of Supervisory Clergy about the Courses

A questionnaire was drawn up in order to attempt to interpret the experience of those whose rôle has been to supervise at first hand the Course – trained clergy, either through Training Incumbency or Team Rectorship, or to work alongside them with the general oversight implied by the function and responsibilities of being Rural Dean. The questions represented a slightly simplified version of those sent to Bishops. No reference was made to diocesan policy, but the question concerning confidence in the adequacy of Course training in respect to preparation for senior posts was retained. The text of the document is printed overleaf.

It was recognised at the outset that those having contact with Course trained clergy would differ quite widely in the manner of their contact, and that not all would be able to offer truly comparative data. For instance there would be a great deal of difference between an established Training Incumbent who might have trained several Course trained clergy in the setting of a larger number of College trained candidates, on the one hand, and a Rural Dean who might have had contact with just one individual in a different parish in his deanery, on the other. Nevertheless it was thought a worthwhile exercise to see if common strands in evaluation might emerge. A supply of the following questionnaire was forwarded to each Rural Dean (Area Dean) in the Church of England with the request that these be passed on to supervisory clergy where relevant.

Regional Theological Course survey
Dept. of Theology, Durham. July 2001

1. Name _____

2. Diocese _____

3. Capacity in which you have supervised or overseen those trained on Regional Courses (e.g. Rural Dean, Training Incumbent etc.) _____

4. Number of people trained on Courses whom you have directly supervised

a) N.S.M _____

b) Stipendiary curates _____

5. Number of people trained on Courses whom you have

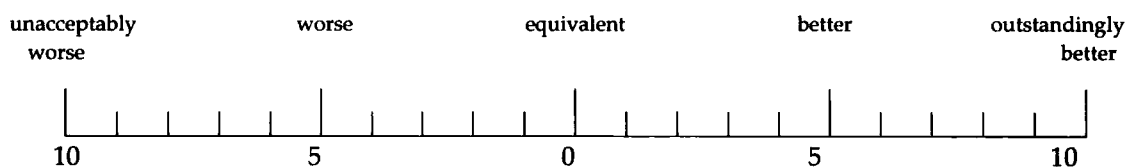
a) known as Team Vicar colleagues if you are a Team Rector _____

b) known as local Incumbents or Priests-in-Charge if you are a Rural Dean _____

6. Could you identify the Course(s) concerned and approximate dates of attendance? _____

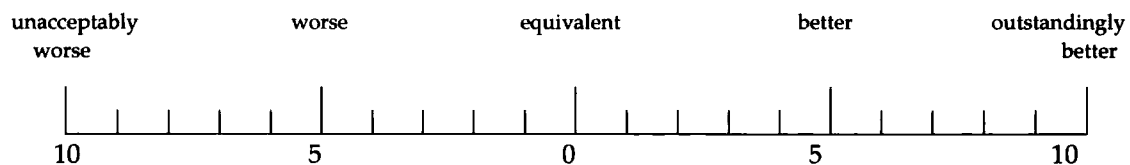
7. On the evidence of those you have supervised or overseen, how would you relate Course training to College training in the development of aptitude in the following areas?

a) In-depth knowledge of the Bible:

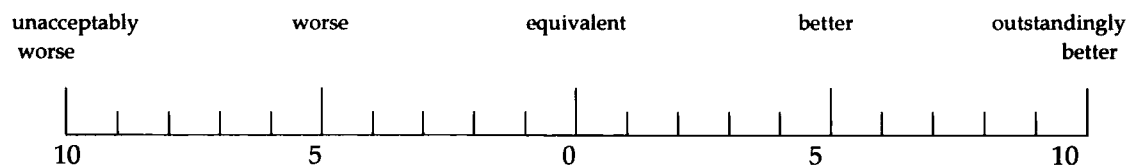


(please mark with a cross at the relevant point)

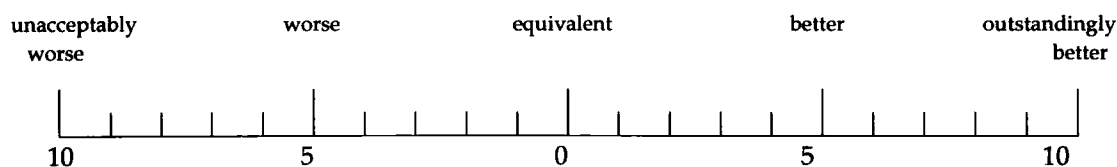
b) Training in Mission awareness and skills:



c) Personal growth in the life of prayer:



d) General academic theology:



If you have not supervised anyone trained at a college, please answer the questions relative to your perception of the needs of the particular post(s) and tick this box ☐

8. Could you describe any notable a) competences and b) problems in individuals you have supervised which in your opinion are attributable at least in part to training on Courses?

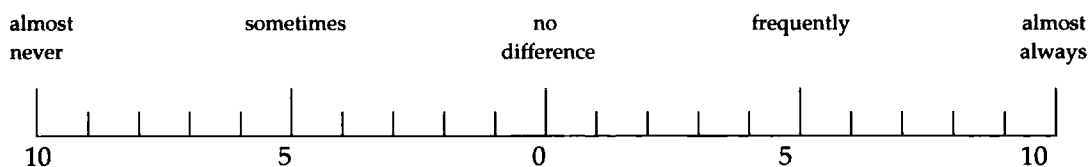
9. Based on your actual experience of Course-trained individuals, what would you assess are the principal

a) strengths

b) weaknesses

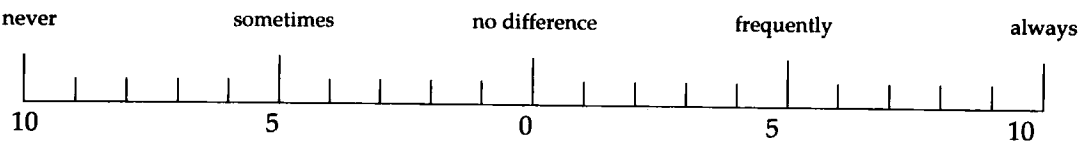
of this form of training?

10. In your experience of all clergy failing to reach their full potential post-ordination, to what extent are they likely to have trained on a Course?



It would be especially helpful if you could provide overleaf (and anonymously) brief details of any case of significant failure which you would attribute either a) to factors relating to the individual's having trained on a Course, or b) to factors which would have been alleviated had the individual trained on a Course.

11. Would you consider training on Courses as adequate preparation for posts of senior responsibility within the church?



12. Could you describe any other issues concerning training on Courses which in your opinion should be given greater consideration by the Church either at a diocesan or national level.

Thank you very much for your help.

An interesting by-product of the survey was to find that many supervising clergy are not clear about the difference between a Regional Theological Course and an Ordained Local Ministry Scheme. Some one in twelve of replies received referred to the latter and could not be included in the analysis of results. Of those responses which could be included, 105 came from Rural Deans and a further 105 from Training Incumbents. It should be mentioned that many of the Rural Deans were also Training Incumbents in their own right. The total of 210 replies is at first sight disappointing. But as many of these were from clergy who had been responsible for supervising several colleagues, the total number of individuals supervised in fact was to 752. Of these 514 were from Rural Deans and 238 from Training Incumbents. Given the general busyness of responsible clergy and understandable reluctance to spend time completing surveys not addressed to them personally, this is a most encouraging proportion of those who have been trained on the Courses. The scatter of individual Regional Courses mentioned by the respondents in their answers to question 6 was reasonably representative of the size of the Courses, given the scope of the sample. However, there was a tendency for supervision dates to be more recent than distant, and so significant Courses such as Southwark, now not in existence, were under-represented. The reason for this is probably that supervisory clergy for earlier years have now retired and therefore have not been reached by the questionnaire. However, it is no bad thing that the answers are generally more up-to-date and pertain therefore more fully to the present situation.

The greatest divergence between the answers given by supervisory clergy and those given by Bishops was in relation to question 11 on the present survey (q.12 for the bishops), namely, 'Would you consider training on Courses as

adequate preparation for posts of senior responsibility within the Church?' Whereas only 5 out of 25 Bishops answering this question in the terms set by the grid (20%) answered in the direction of 'sometimes' or 'never', this was the case with 46% of Training Incumbents and 68% of Rural Deans. The latter statistic is especially alarming. The Rural Deans concerned were responding to a spread of both people they had personally supervised after ordination and those they had known in later years as Incumbents in their deaneries. For such a large proportion to be lacking in confidence about the suitability of one of the major training models for ordinands, when it comes to issues of senior responsibility, is of the greatest concern. The mismatch between the response of the supervisory clergy and their Bishops is also a matter which is worthy of further investigation. An educated extrapolation from overall answers received would be that whereas Bishops tend to see the advantages and disadvantages of Course training at a distance from many of the individuals involved and therefore consider the Courses adequate, given the presence in a particular individual of other essential gifts, the Rural Deans see individual training results and are alarmed at the prospect that the relevant individuals, being thus equipped, might be given senior responsibility and influence. Whatever the details, the Church's Rural Deans should be taken seriously and no action should be taken to raise the profile of Course training until their reservations have been properly addressed. Later in this chapter, and in the supplementary notes, will be found details of the various issues cited in this respect.

The answers to question 7 relating Course training to College training and concerned with aptitude in Bible knowledge, Mission awareness and skills, the life of prayer and general academic theology, were more nearly compatible with those of the Bishops (question 8).

Table 13/1: Relationship of Course to College Training by Subject Area

In the following tables, a '-' rating refers to the direction of 'worse' on the grid and a '+' rating refers to the direction of 'better'.

7a In-depth knowledge of the Bible

	Total No of Responses	Average Rating	No of '0' Responses	No of '+' responses	Average Rating	No of '-' Responses	Average Rating
Rural Deans	100	-1.4	23	17	+2.7	60	-3.2
Training Incumbents	97	-1.5	34	11	+4.0	52	-3.7
Total	197	-1.5	57	28	+3.2	112	-3.4

7b. Training in Mission awareness and skills.

	Total No of Responses	Average Rating	No of '0' Responses	No of '+' Responses	Average Rating	No of '-' Responses	Average Rating
Rural Deans	101	+0.9	26	47	+3.7	28	-3.3
Training Incumbents	97	+1.1	19	51	+4.0	27	-3.7
Total	198	+1.0	45	98	+3.9	55	-3.4

7c. Personal Growth in the life of prayer.

	Total No of Responses	Average Rating	No of '0' Responses	No of '+' Responses	Average Rating	No of '-' Responses	Average Rating
Rural Deans	100	-0.6	26	28	+3.4	46	-3.4
Training Incumbents	95	-0.2	26	31	+3.9	38	-3.6
Total	195	-0.4	52	59	+3.7	84	-3.5

7d. General academic theology.

	Total No of Responses	Average Rating	No of '0' Responses	No of '+' Responses	Average Rating	No of '-' Responses	Average Rating
Rural Deans	101	-1.9	21	13	+3.3	67	-3.5
Training Incumbents	98	-1.8	31	14	+3.4	53	-4.2
Total	199	-1.8	52	27	+3.4	120	-3.8

Table 13/2

Question 7 – Percentage comparison between Bishops and Supervisory clergy

	% Reporting Equivalence of Courses to Colleges		Reporting 'Better'				Reporting 'Worse'			
			%		av. rating		%		av. rating	
	+'s	Sup Clergy	+'s	Sup Clergy	+'s	Sup Clergy	+'s	Sup Clergy	+'s	Sup Clergy
7a Bible	30.8	28.9	7.7	14.2	+2.75	+3.2	61.5	56.9	-3.0	-3.4
7b Mission	26.9	22.7	50.0	49.5	+3.5	+3.9	23.1	27.8	-2.75	-3.4
7c Prayer	50.0	26.7	19.2	30.2	+2.4	+3.7	30.8	43.1	-2.9	-3.5
7d Theology	19.2	26.1	15.4	13.6	+1.5	+3.4	65.4	60.3	-3.2	-3.8

The most significant factor indicated by the table comparing the responses of the Bishops and supervisory clergy is the broad agreement between them about the proportion believing as a result of their experience of individuals that Courses are better or worse than Colleges in the area of Biblical Studies, Mission awareness and skills and general academic Theology. The fact that between 56.9% and 61.5% of supervisory clergy and Diocesan Bishops experience Regional Courses as being inferior in enabling in-depth knowledge of the Bible, and not just marginally inferior at that, is a fact that should be openly tabled in the Church of England when equivalence between training modes is being asserted. Even worse is the agreement of between 60.3% and 65.4% of the same people that an inferior understanding of general academic Theology results from Course training. To counter these negatives stands the almost exact agreement of 50% of all concerned that Courses offer better training in Mission awareness and skills. In broad terms, the pressure of time on the Courses, both for academic contact time and student reflection, probably explains the former result. Likewise, the act of theological training in an everyday setting

probably explains the opinion about the greater facility of Courses in relating the things of God to the everyday world of home and work.

The disagreement between Bishops and supervisory clergy about the equivalence or non-equivalence between Courses and Colleges in enabling growth in the life of prayer is illuminating. Whilst half of the Bishops thought them equivalent, only a quarter of the supervisory clergy, in round terms, were of that opinion. However, both more of the supervisory clergy thought the Courses better, and more thought them worse, than did the Bishops. Perhaps the answer here is that Colleges and Courses are different. Colleges will tend to provide the opportunity to spend more time in organised patterns of prayer, whilst Course students will tend to develop their own individual patterns which 'work' because they fit in with the busy routine of practical living. It is probably true that Course-learned patterns are prone to failure through lack of systematic depth but that College-learned patterns are also prone to failure through the difficulty of maintaining them in a busy routine. Of the four curriculum areas sampled, growth in the life of prayer is the only one in which there seems to be a genuine overall ambivalence among those involved in the oversight of ex-students and the evaluation of their strengths and weaknesses.

It cannot be pretended that regional Theological Courses and Theological Colleges offer different but equivalent modes of training for ordinands. That they offer different modes of training is undeniable, but those differences are definable in clear terms, as are the job requirements of particular clergy posts. It is a dubious evaluation of praxis to conclude that clergy trained by either route are equally well prepared, just different. Table 13/3 summarises the overall ratings of all the

respondents involved in the oversight of Course-trained clergy with regard to the significant curriculum areas treated:

Table 13/3: Overall rating of Course training relative to College training.

Curriculum Area	Overall Rating (Bishops)	Overall Rating (Supervisory Clergy)
Bible	-1.6	-1.5
Mission	+1.1	+1.0
Prayer	-0.4	-0.4
Theology	-1.9	-1.8

Were there to have been a much more significantly higher rating of the Mission area, it might have been arguable that this more than outweighed the ratings for Bible and Theology. But this was not the case. Also, in the context of the general ambivalence noted in terms of numbers of those evaluating prayer, the agreement in overall negative rating shown above may, sadly, tell its own story.

It was decided to investigate whether the survey results could justify any differentiation between the different individual Regional Courses. To do this the most distinctive individual results were subject to further analysis. These were the responses to questions 7a and 7d concerning in-depth knowledge of the Bible and general academic Theology. There were some of the Regional Courses for which there were five or fewer responses and these were ignored for comparative purposes, the sample size being deemed too small for obtaining accurate results. Of the sixteen Courses remaining, table 13/4 shows the results:

Table 13/4: Differentiation Between the Regional Courses by Supervisory Clergy

7a Bible			7d Theology		
Position	Course	Average Rating	Position	Course	Average Rating
1	CBDTI	-0.2	1	CBDTI	-0.4
2	SWMTC	-0.8	2	SDMTS	-1.3
3	SDMTS	-1.1	3	WEMTC	-1.5
4	SEITE	-1.2	4	SAOMC	-1.6
5	WEMTC	-1.3	5=	NOC	-1.7
6=	EAMTC	-1.4	5=	WMMTC	-1.7
6=	SAOMC	-1.4	7	EAMTC	-1.9
8	NEOC	-1.5	8	SOC	-2.0
9	NOC	-1.6	9	STETS	-2.1
10	EMMTC	-1.7	10=	SWMTC	-2.3
11=	WMMTC	-1.8	10=	SEITE	-2.3
11=	STETS	-1.8	12	EMMTC	-2.4
13=	SAMTS	-2.6	13	NTMTC	-2.7
13=	NTMTC	-2.6	14=	NEOC	-3.0
13=	SOC	-2.6	14=	OHMTC	-3.0
16	OHMTC	-3.9	16	SAMTS	-3.4

It is true that the different sample sizes for the different institutions could have a distorting effect on the figures, coupled with the different personal assessment criteria and standards of the respondents. Nevertheless, the results give the distinct impression that a definite range of standards is perceived between the different Courses. It would be foolish to carry the analysis too far, to a level of detail not justified by the accuracy of the data. However the wide difference in results would indicate that some work needs to be done by central Church authorities about differing standards. Perhaps, also, some means of research needs to be devised on a continuing basis to supply feedback to the training institutions about the effectiveness or otherwise in ministry of their former trainees.

Certain features of the analysis seem noteworthy. The first position of the Carlisle and Blackburn Diocesan Training Institution, one of the smaller Regional Courses, is significant, as is the low position of the Oak Hill Ministry Training Course (where one might have assumed particular effectiveness in Biblical Studies)

and the St. Albans Ministry Training Scheme – unique because it had large numbers of students testing their vocation, rather than recommended for ordination, among its students. At the time of writing this, the Church of England's Working Party on the Structure and Funding of Ordination Training is known to be recommending that in future all ordination candidates do their first year of training in exactly the SAMTS pattern of setting. This research would indicate that path to be folly. Other noteworthy results from the tables seem to be the significantly reduced rating of STETS over its predecessor SDMTS and the significantly increased rating of SAOMC over SAMTS, in similar circumstances. NTMTC shows an improvement over OHMTC, but not much, and remains towards the bottom of the tables.

A similar exercise was carried out in connection with question 11 which asked about the suitability of Course-trained clergy for senior posts of responsibility. The question perhaps gives some feel of overall confidence rating. The results were as follows:-

Table 13/5: Q.11 Preparation for posts of senior responsibility. [] = non-current

Position	Course	Average Rating
1	CBDTI	+1.9
[2	SDMTS	+0.4]
[3	SOC	+0.1]
4	NOC	-0.3
5	SAOMC	-0.9
6	STETS	-1.0
7	NTMTC	-1.3
8=	SWMTC	-2.1
[8=	OHMTC	-2.1]
10	EAMTC	-2.3
11	WMMTC	-2.7
12	SEITE	-2.8
[13	SAMTS	-3.4]
14	EMMTC	-3.6
15=	WEMTC	-3.7
15=	NEOC	-3.7

Again, it is important not to push the detail of these results too far. But the first place of CBDTI is again interesting, as is the range of rating between that Course and the lowest results. One would not expect the development of leadership qualities *per se* to be directly related to facility in Biblical Studies and general academic theology, although certainly the leadership of Bishops is held to be distinctive because of their teaching rôle. Nevertheless, the comments about the relative positions of SDMTS and STETS, and also SAOMC and SAMTS, made in connection with questions 7a and 7d also hold true here. By contrast, for the Southwark Ordination Course a much higher position was accorded to preparation for posts of senior responsibility than in the individual subject areas. With EMMTC and especially WEMTC the opposite effect is discernible.

As for question 10, about clergy failing to reach their full potential, as with the Bishops there were fewer answers due to fewer individuals having the relevant experience. However 158 did reply and, of these, 91 (some 58%), thought there to be no difference between Course and College trained clergy in this respect. Of the balance, very slightly more (35 as against 32) thought that Course trained clergy were more likely to fail to reach their full potential, but when the grid scores were evaluated, the balance was in the opposite direction – again by a small margin (-0.4). The conclusion must be that failure to reach one's potential as a member of the clergy is not related so much to one's initial theological training, but to other factors. As with the Bishops' replies, however, certain of the testimonies about individual experience are worth noting:¹

- Details of an individual's background and experience were missed, whilst they might well have been picked up on a residential course. The person concerned had a breakdown and is no longer active in ministry.

¹ Comments extracted from the following individual survey replies: RD's 27, 32, 35, 51, 58, 61, 62, 69, 73, 77, 99; TI's 13, 73, 113, 126.

- I balance poor relationships / personal development in some college – trained colleagues with the academic ignorance of some course-based colleagues.

- Marriages and families who experience residential training are more able to withstand the goldfish bowl experience of vicarage life.

- Most obvious case for me was a NSM policeman who failed to keep work and ministry separate and singularly failed to listen and heed advice. Perhaps he should not have been accepted for training.

- In the case of the two greatest disappointments it seems to me that their Course had not addressed personal characteristics which seriously undermined their ministry.

i) a strongly introverted person had a view of 'illumination' and personal guidance which reminded one of the Gnostics. She never really understood the corporate nature of Anglicanism.

ii) a highly introverted person so enjoyed / needed to be the centre of attention that in my view it undermined her priesthood.

The close quarters cut and thrust of a residential course and the community discipline can challenge such people. My experience is that those trained residentially are more likely to be collaborative in style.

- I have noticed that really weak Course students drop out [whereas] weak / inappropriate college students are likely to be ordained.

- The worst failures have been in college-trained stipendiary ministers. Regional Courses seem to produce neither the best nor the worst.

- It all boils down to this issue of priestly formation. One ordinand had the inner self-discipline to make the most of what the Course offered, and to supplement it where necessary. The other lacked this personal discipline and the Course seemed to have done nothing to develop it. The newly ordained minister had little understanding of "Church" or what priestly formation really involves – and ended up out of depth and all at sea. Having said that, the one disastrous curate I have had was on a 3 year residential college course and left it, I should judge, no better prepared than when he arrived.

- I have found with 3 persons trained on Courses and who have served as NSM's a Maverick attitude to ministry. This has caused authority issues as well as pastoral problems. One particular person had a "chip on his shoulder" that he was working class. I felt that many issues about this person's personality should have been reported on / dealt with whilst he was on the Course.

- Had an ordained been trained on a full-time theological course, their vocation would have been tested together with their suitability for ordination. As it happened the diaconate had to be repeated in another diocese and priesting delayed for two years. This has severely damaged the parish and the person's self-esteem.

- In general, Course-trained priests are more 'open' in matters of ecumenical co-operation, sexual equality, etc. It is the institutionally-trained clergy who seem much more hide-bound and conservative in their attitudes.

- cannot recall any 'failures' that would have been attributed to the type of training received. They have more to do with personality problems, breakdown of relationships and lack of adequate professional support.

- The residential colleges can all have their own issues – as can students.
- One curate struggled for well over a year with the unrealistic high expectations ‘imposed’ during *college* training.
- No difference [Course / College in failing to reach full potential] but Courses have a higher proportion of females and NSM candidates for whom there is a ‘glass ceiling’.
- The problem is that people are up against the inbuilt snobbery of College courses, which are perceived to be superior. NSM’s are absolutely crucial to the future of our Church and they ought by now to be in senior posts and also made Canons etc. but the accent is all too much on the stipendiaries. NSM’s are needed for their labour but ignored in the overall scheme of things. In my experience their training and performance is of a very high standard.
- Failure depends on an individual and his / her circumstances, and the extent to which a Diocese notes and encourages progress.

From this list of comments can be extracted both problems with College training and with Course training. The individual experiences listed should not be seen as arguments for or against one form of training or another. Nevertheless, weaknesses in all forms of training should continually be addressed. Those related to Courses from these experiences of failure seem to relate to the lack of membership of a distinctive community of training within which needs for personal and family growth and development can both be identified and take place, and through which a sense of corporate purpose in the service of the Church can be developed, in contrast to what might be described as the syndrome of ‘my ministry’.

Many comments were offered by the supervisory clergy about both question 8 concerning notable competences and problems discerned in Course-trained individuals, and question 9 about principal strengths and weaknesses perceived in relation to the Regional Courses generally. First of all, the polarity of views between those rating the Courses highest and lowest on question 7 (curricular areas) and question 11 (adequacy of preparation for senior posts) was investigated. It should be noted that in this there was no significant overlap between the respondents and those already cited in connection with individual failures.

Those rating the Courses lowest in regard to curricular areas had the following to say about notable problems discerned in individuals:

- Lack of confidence in many areas of ministry. Lack of judgement in pastoral matters. Lack of humility in academic areas.
- Arrogant unawareness of the benefit of full-time residential training.
- Unrealistically low expectations of workload in full-time parish ministry and inability to take responsibility for own work.
- Lack of academic or biblical knowledge and framework for own ministry (inadequate foundation for preaching and teaching).
- Lack of understanding of the radically different nature of ordained ministry from active lay church membership.

In addition, those saying that Courses are never adequate as preparation for posts of senior responsibility cited:

- Lack of understanding of the nature of 'the Church'.
- My belief is that there is simply not enough time on a locally-based part-time Course to adequately cover all aspects of the ministry for which ordinands etc are being trained.
- Serious deficiencies in knowledge of worship, of administration, of legalities & the professional conduct of ministry – e.g. lack of awareness of confidentiality, loyalty etc.

These comments on problems associated with individuals were written in the context of the following understanding of the weaknesses of Courses on the part of the same individuals:

- I feel it is inadequate in terms of preparation for a life-time of ministry.
- No breadth of experience gained by living in a different community.
- Makes heavy demands, often putting strains on family / professional life, with minimal increase in the candidates' competence as preacher / theologian / missionary.
- Inflexible and unchallenging – especially where candidate is not full-time in secular or church work; lack of academic rigour and poor support for biblical knowledge; obsession with spirituality and group dynamics.
- Part-time courses appear to lead to a misunderstanding of NSM ministry. It becomes part-time too, with little sense of vocation in the work-place and little real commitment.
- Lack of time generally. Pressure on home / family. Almost complete lack of practical input.
- Lack of association with others. Lack of proper supervision and opportunity to fob off discipline etc.

In addition to those reservations, the balancing evidence of positive enthusiasm must be referred to. Those rating the Courses most highly in the areas of questions 7 and 11 cited the following particular competences they had experienced or identified in Course-trained individuals:

- Much more aware of people-based skills.
- Improvement in *all* areas.
- Breath of view of the Church of England has been enormously strengthened.
- I think the training on Courses is more realistic – Candidates do not come down with a bump after ordination.
- When it works, course-trained individuals tend to be better at *applied* theology, drawing in on-going secular and church experience.

Again, these comments were in the context of general strengths of Courses which were assessed by the same respondents as follows:-

- wide knowledge of local area and parishes.
- Pastoralia; Liturgy; OT and NT.
- Knowledge – being parish based.
- Alertness to the great need for evangelism, teaching of prayer, the bible and sacraments. Enthusiasm for a church welcoming youth.
- Cohort identity. ‘Hands-on’ approach on placements etc.
- Knowledge of local area. Management of time. Self-discipline.
- The reality of juggling priestly and family life and of expectations of a parish.
- Undoubted gains of STETS because of its ecumenical foundation.
- Non-partisan – you cannot avoid those whose style is different, and many move on as a result.

The list of competences of Course-trainees and the general strengths of the Courses is impressive, and a paper citing the various references could field a powerful argument for the increase of Course-based training. But such a temptation must be resisted. There has already been demonstrated a remarkable agreement of perception between Bishops and supervisory clergy that the Courses are not on average able to give such good training in Biblical Studies or general academic Theology. Although the above lists of comments from supervisory clergy with the greatest enthusiasm for Courses, and the greatest reservations, were chosen on the

basis of the grid markings recorded on completed questionnaires, it is worth noting that none of the Rural Deans felt able to give the Courses maximum marks as suitable training for senior posts. Those two who were among the top five markers under the question 7 areas of the curriculum were unable to identify any notable competences among the individuals whose training they had expressed great enthusiasm for. This is a worrying result, given the truth that the Rural Deans were the respondents who had had the opportunities to observe Course-trained individuals not only up to and in the years immediately following ordination, but also over subsequent years when those concerned were functioning in various capacities including Incumbencies.

Some of the comments recorded above illustrate the individuality of ability and viewpoint inevitably present both in the ranks of the Course-trained and their supervisors. Hence the listing of Old Testament and New Testament studies as a strength of Courses is a genuine individual perception, but is not borne out by the general weight of evidence. But other comments, rather than being adversarial, build together to establish distinctive characteristics of Course-based ordination training.

By way of illustration of the above, one set of characteristics of Courses revolves round the 'stay at home' nature of training in contrast to the joining of a distinctive gathered community of those of shared calling. This is always less disruptive to family life both physically and financially. But the disruption and stress caused by lack of time for the student can be equivalent, if different. There can be significant strain in connection with employment, not of course felt by those in full-time training. For those entering stipendiary ministry and with families, the stress of transition to public 'goldfish bowl' life is concentrated, some would say

unhelpfully, at the point of ordination. The person remaining based in his own sponsoring church to train will inevitably have a high level of local knowledge on ordination (assuming in the same locality) and may well have benefited from a helpful exposure both to other ecclesial traditions and denominations. But there is also for some a high danger of increased self-centredness and what has been described as the syndrome of 'my ministry'. There is likely to be a greater ease, at ordination, in sharing with lay people in collaborative ministry. But there may easily be a failure to appreciate the distinctive professional understanding and emphasis of a 'clerk in holy orders'. There may also be a lack of understanding of 'the Church' and of allegiance to it, as against a sense of individual calling.

Another set of characteristics of Course training revolves around the emphasis on academic theology against practical theology. This has been touched on before in connection with the general agreement that Course-trained individuals are better educated in awareness and skills related to the whole area of mission. Courses are generally said to be light on Biblical Studies and academic Theology, but strong on the making of practical connections between theology and everyday life. There is a serious lack of research to back up this claim. If it is a true claim then it should be possible to identify a real connection between growing churches and churches which are strongly engaged with their local communities, and the presence of Course-trained clergy. Otherwise the criticism must be answered that whilst it is always possible to learn to apply what are known, one can never apply what one does not know, irrespective of the level of skill of application.

Of 'other comments' passed in answer to question 12, those included by those most and least enthusiastic for the Courses included comment on several additional areas not already referred to. One was a criticism of a dominant tradition

of churchmanship which could not be avoided by students: 'In this corner of England, the only available Course training is totally monochrome liberal theology (tinged with rampant feminism). There should be a choice of training or toleration of differing viewpoints.' Also, 'Courses appear to be dominated by liberal theology – contrast the spectrum available in the range of colleges.' Clearly in a mode of training without any choice of institution it would be indefensible if all students were not to feel equally valued and encouraged. One of the Course 'enthusiasts' asserted that 'Those training on College courses tend to live in an ivory tower.' It has already been shown that the Principals of Regional Courses have on average far less Incumbent experience than their counterparts in Theological Colleges. It may also be that ivory towers exist in the Regions when it comes to theological viewpoint!

A very different comment was the assertion 'In answering question 11 I am aware of the disgraceful attitude to those training on Regional Courses – and of the real difficulty of the old boy networks – of which I am deeply aware that the Church has to suffer.' Any casting of aspersions which amount to snobbery or even inverted snobbery is indefensible. But as long as Inspection reports for the varying institutions remain closed documents there is little hope of establishing objective standards or quashing prejudice. A more open way forward is strongly recommended.

No matter how good any training scheme might be, many factors contributing to the effectiveness, or otherwise, of a member of the clergy will always be more closely related to the person than to the training. Nevertheless there is a perception that while there are undoubtedly many highly experienced and able individuals who train on Regional Courses, there is also a likelihood that the

Courses may host more than their fair share of weaker candidates too. The following comments are indicative:

- Problems and failures encountered are not solely related to the form of training. Selection of candidates especially for the Distinctive Diaconate and for ministry as an NSM does not always equate with selection of stipendiary clergy.
- I am concerned that the criteria adopted by selectors for training seem not to be clear. Surprise is frequent both at who *is* chosen and who is not. The curate who worked with me [stipendiary, having trained on a regional Course] was certainly a surprise – in that she never worked out considerable problems during, before or after training – the professional element in ministry being particularly badly understood. I suspect (only a suspicion) that she used appearance of vulnerability to deflect any deeper searching that a residential course might have enabled. Getting away with murder, really!

Either the Church should define the job of ministry it requires of its ordained and train its candidates accordingly, or else it ought to recognise the varying qualifications and skills of those it has trained, and deploy them in the knowledge of the varying gifts and abilities available.

In conclusion, the following lists give a brief summary of the narrative answers received to questions 8, 9 and 12, concerned with competences and problems in individuals, strengths and weaknesses of Courses, and other issues, together with an indication of the numbers of comments received in each category. Any notion that the Regional Training Courses are not highly distinctive in terms of their characteristics, strengths and weaknesses, does not do justice to the facts. Any suggestion that an individual who comes to ordination from a regional Course will be able to offer the same ministry in detail as if he or she had come from theological College again ignores the evidence.

Lists summarising responses to questions 8, 9 and 12.

(Number of respondents overall = 210. Some made no comment on individual questions; some made more than one. Total numbers making similar comments shown in brackets by each entry.)

Table 13/6

Question 8a – Notable Competences in Course – trained individuals

Competence	No. of Responses
Application of theology to parish life / workplace	19
Strength in practical / pastoral issues and mission	15
Skill in use of time, integration of life and ministry	12
Communication skills with ordinary people	7
Teamwork and collaborative ministry	6
Maturity due to age and experience	6
Less concerned with churchmanship	6
More liberal in outlook	4
High personal motivation	4
General versatility	3
Knowledge of local community and churches	3
Secular skills e.g. teaching	2
Experience of preparing worship in various situations	2
General academic theology	1
Awareness of politically-correct issues	1
Non-clericalism	1
Easier transition to parish life	1
Regular attendance at daily office and prayer meetings	1

Table 13/7

Question 8b – Notable problems in Course – trained individuals.

Problem	No. of Responses
Inadequate knowledge of doctrine and different approaches to theology	16
Lack of depth in liturgical understanding	14
General academic lightness including reading	9
Shallowness of spirituality	8
Lack of priestly consciousness in contrast to former lay life	8
Inadequate knowledge of Biblical Studies	7
General lack of time during training	7
Personal / family stress during training	7
Self-centredness	6
Inadequate knowledge of church history	5
Lack of reflection and general 'depth'	5
Lack of adaptation to parish demands	5
Lack of pastoral experience	4
Inadequate view of "the Church"	4
Lack of training in preaching	4
Lack of integration of NSM ministry and daily work incl. time management	4
Lack of experience of membership of a dedicated community	3
Lack of instruction in professional matters (eg registers etc)	3
"Hooked" on particular themes	2
No patristics	2
Difficult transition to Incumbency	2
Lack of confidence	2
Lack of awareness of collaborative ministry / teamwork	2
Theological liberalism	2
Limited view of parish life	1
Reliance on local parishes for practical instruction	1
Impatience	1
Lack of understanding of authority and delegation	1
No training for multiple – parish benefices	1
Unlikely to bring something new into a parish situation	1
Ambivalence in diaconal expectations	1
Weakness in evangelism	1
Lack of discipline and punctuality	1
Less long-term potential	1
Lack of flexibility	1

Table 13/8

Question 9a – Principal Strengths of Regional Course training

Strength	No. of Responses
Cultural contextualisation	53
Encounters with wide range of churchmanship / background	23
Less disruption of work / family	13
Value of candidates' local church as training resource / support base	12
Drawing on candidates' life experience / maturity	11
Encouraging good time management / self-discipline	11
Produces greater sense of personal commitment	10
Relating faith to the world of work	9
Accessible for more people	8
Good group support and learning	7
Produces good pastoral skills	7
Gaining more experience of practical parish life	6
Encourages personal determination / robustness	6
General good academic / pastoral awareness	5
Prayer discipline	5
Effectiveness in relationship skills	5
Cheaper	5
Produces wide local area knowledge	4
Produces personal adaptability	4
Good ideas for mission / outreach	3
Encouraging theological reflection	3
Ecumenical dimension to training	3
Encouraging confidence / self awareness	2
Development of teamwork	2
Better Biblical knowledge	2
Liturgy	2
Strengthens personal responsibility for future learning	2
Integration of theological disciplines	1
Retaining of individuality	1
Extended parish placement	1
General articulateness	1
More concentrated training	1
No family financial burdens	1
Producing humility	1
Producing less anxiety about failure	1
Good for N.S.M. ministry	1

Table 13/9: Question 9b – Principal Weaknesses of Regional Course training.

Weakness	No. of Responses
Lack of depth / academic confidence	38
Lack of time and creation of personal pressures	32
Lack of community experience / awareness	26
Lack of experience of / commitment to corporate prayer	22
Lack of appreciation of “the [wider] Church”	12
Diminished professional self-awareness	12
Lack of ability to reflect theologically	10
Lack of liturgical / preaching training	10
General lack of understanding of parish life	9
Lack of awareness of theological traditions	7
Students are less well-read	5
Lack of Biblical input	4
Lack of practical input	4
Less ability to collaborate with colleagues	4
Poor time management	3
Patchiness in knowledge / understanding	3
No sense of personal cost of priesthood	3
Having to travel long distances during training	3
Political correctness and liberalism	2
Lack of missiological skills / ideas	2
Families not prepared for parish demands	2
No space ‘just to be’	2
Generally inadequate for a lifetime’s ministry	2
Can dodge big issues by going home	2
Difficult to contact tutors / supervisors	2
Insufficiently focussed	2
Leads to ‘part-time’ understanding of NSM	1
Lack of communication (not preaching) skills	1
Temptation to do ‘just enough’	1
Lack of stimulus from expert tutors	1
Too clerical	1
Students lack confidence about being properly trained	1
No hobbies except for church = narrow minded	1
Lack of personal growth	1
‘Masters’ of no skills	1
Poor pastoral care during training	1
Minimal effectiveness	1
Unchallenging	1
Obsession with spirituality + group dynamics	1
Poor access to library + other academic facilities	1
Weak on ‘folk-religion’	1
widely varying tutorial style	1
Insufficient ‘Anglican’ theology	1
Some courses too small for a rich training experience	1

Table 13/10

Question 12. Other issues concerning training on Courses

i. Rural Deans

Problems concerning the inclusion of families in the process of training
Sheer pressure of time and commitment involved (3 comments)
Paying of 'lip service' to mature adults' knowledge and experience (2 comments)
Coping with candidates of widely differing abilities
Need for variety in training options
Tendency of others to treat Course training as second best
Need for wider base of parish experience than home parish
The right split between Course and post-ordination training
Quality of NSM candidates compared with others
Interdependence of all ministry – lay and ordained
Use of the internet for mission
Overloaded syllabus leads to superficial coverage
Ecumenical involvement can dilute Anglican identity (2 comments)
Students can lack suitable study facilities at home
Lack of definition of ministry aims
Need for co-ordination with students present and future training incumbents (2 comments)
'Contextualisation' of training should result in better mission awareness – does it?
Need to consider formation issues for those who are not outstanding
Can part-time training inculcate total self-giving?
Courses produce individuals broader in their appreciation of different traditions
Why not link Courses with Colleges? (2)
Courses are a cheap alternative but create an unfair burden on students.
Candidates' previously gained gifts and maturity are often significant
Courses can produce a wide disparity between their good and poor candidates.
Experience of breadth of churchmanship does not make for growth
Why train people away from the parish they know?
Are they becoming a politically correct mediocrity?
Need to balance academic and pastoral skills
Lack of New Testament Greek
Lack of preparation for potential transfer NSM to stipendiary
The depth of commitment needed is commensurate with that needed when ordained
It is politically incorrect to criticise Regional Courses!
Lack of attention to the spirituality of failure
Should Course training be longer to be equivalent?
Tutor groups should have a minimum size – say 10.
Good at small issues, but bad at big ones e.g. finding a suitable NSM 'rule of life'
Is the cheapness worth the lack of rigour?
Concentration on 'home parish' training does not prepare one for the rest of the C of E!
Are we training clergy to fill posts, rather than shaping the Church to the gifts available?
Lack of confidence of suitability for stipendiary ministry

No time for reflection can prejudice the whole endeavour
 Colleges too vary greatly in quality!
 Why not include one long residential period (6-weeks) on spirituality?
 Reduction of training to functional components could drastically change the shape
 of the ministry
 Concentration on collaborative ministry can yield problems with authority
 Is it worth training NSM's who can only then give limited time?
 Are we looking for ministry 'on the cheap?'
 Why doesn't NEOC make as much use of the University Dept. of Theology at
 Durham as Cranmer Hall does?
 Can we ever attribute differences between clergy to mode of training?
 Life experience in other jobs can be helpful: it can also be irrelevant!
 The Church must be realistic about the training it can afford.
 Courses feature lack of placements and wider experience of the Church.
 Tendency towards low views of the Church as an institution
 Our local Course is monochrome liberal theology tinged with rampant feminism:
 there should be a choice
 Teaching Liberation Theology but not Exodus doesn't lay adequate foundations.
 The academically weaker need full time training, or it fails to "take"
 Reflective time is essential for priestly formation and can only be found
 residentially
 To compensate for lack of depth, why not continue theological study after
 ordination?
 NEOC has improved greatly in recent years.
Both Courses and Colleges are far from ideal: the Church needs a new system
 Leaving experience of liturgy and pastoralia to one parish limits ones' future
 usefulness
 We should offer the same quality of training in Courses as we do in theological
 Colleges

Question 12. Other issues concerning training on Courses

ii. Training Incumbents

It's hard to judge whether differences are due to the Course or a student's life-history
Courses can be seen as a series of hurdles to be overcome on the way to ordination
Courses are more productive for training NSM's
POT can fill some of the gaps
Great need for task-orientated training, particularly for senior posts.
Readers should not be required to take the full course.
Mixed-mode training is a promising development
More experiential learning is better
A Course is as good as its local tutors
Distance to travel can be a real problem (round trip of 120 miles)
More training required in legalities and practicalities of parish life
Collegiality is hard to replicate part-time
Greater ecumenical dimension is an advantage or disadvantage
Keep training local and earthed – but quality is crucial
Easier to tailor training to individuals on Courses (2 responses)
some students can be treated as second class citizens
Courses are dominated by liberal theology: contrast the range of Colleges (2 responses)
Reshaping necessary for those intending full-time ministry (3 responses)
Exposure to other traditions can lead to defensiveness
More training on the Anglican identity is required
Competence in their church is assumed – but may not be evident
Training at College is *very* expensive
'Horses for courses'
The professional element in ministry can be badly misunderstood
People on Courses have to work so much harder
Poor placements & little challenge = narrow horizons & low expectations
Intense non-residential training can be extremely upsetting for families
How can 3 years part-time compare with a theology degree followed by three years' residential training?
2 colleagues loathed their Course but another was failed utterly by his College and another College-trained should never have been ordained!
For the Christian tradition to survive the 21st century, in depth knowledge of the Bible and academic theology is required by its advocates
Course candidates need eyes for opportunities beyond the structures of the Church
Non-residential Courses should be at *least* 4 years
Those moving to stipendiary posts should take a year's supplementary course at College
Effective training is costly – financially and personally
I am aware of the disgraceful attitudes to those training on Regional Courses
Collaborative ministry is not dealt with sufficiently
Mixed mode training as at Lichfield in the 60's was forward-thinking
NSM's going stipendiary out of their training period are a real problem

In an age of rapid change for the world and crisis for the church, we need more than
 a smattering of theology!
 Some Courses are in a different league from others!
 No BCP liturgy and doctrine
 Produce cross-discipline inflexibility and disdain for rites of passage
 Preaching from the Bible
 Woeful mistrust of the training incumbent by the staff of the Course
 Lack of specialised help and discipline
 Can enable more understanding of the parish at ordination
 Need to clarify issues concerning the diaconate at national level.
 Needs of families as a whole
 'Difficult to see what, if anything x learned'
 Need to look at representative composition of governing bodies
 Relationship with OLM schemes needs examining
 Need to include social action, leadership, emerging forms of Church, gifts of the
 Holy Spirit, ministry of apostle, evangelist + prophet
 I wish we had a training incumbent within the Course staff
 Inculcate little self awareness – afterwards candidates concentrate on their own
 needs rather than the congregation's and do not understand their changed rôle
 The stress it puts on trainees and their families (4 responses)
 BIG PROBLEM – Courses for our diocese are liberal and we are not
 Clergy aged 50+ need educating as to how Courses operate
 Failure to counter career- mindedness
 How can one lead a community without having experienced one?
 Students feel the Church undervalues their life experiences (2 responses)
 Academic training on Courses is inadequate, but I have no solution to offer
 People are up against the inbuilt snobbery of College courses
 I am very happy with my curate and am filling in the gaps
 Courses suffer from a surfeit of context – they should develop the tools of ministry
 which can then be applied
 Specifically Anglican formation on Courses where the ecumenical presence is
 strong
 I was not impressed by what my curate told me about his training
 Some Courses consider incumbents as 'training partners' – others do not
 Have to rely on other sources for a training which is Evangelical
 Should be a presumption in favour of non-residential training on formation and
 financial grounds

Chapter 14: Survey of Past Students

The survey of past students yielded over a thousand responses. Since the information publicly available in *Crockfords* contains details of how each member of the clergy has been trained, it is possible to identify in a straightforward way whether any individual has been trained on a Regional Theological Course or at a Theological College. Because of this, it was decided to write to past students of the Courses on an individual basis in an attempt to encourage completion of the questionnaires. Although it would have been possible to approach everyone who had so trained, or to choose a proportionate sample of them, eventually it was decided to approach the whole constituency, but with three limiting factors. In the first instance, those who had subsequently retired (or reached the age of 70) were excluded. Of course, there is a sense in which anyone ordained never retires spiritually, but nevertheless it was felt that to restrict the questionnaire to those still defined as active would maximise the relationship of the answers to the experiences and problems of active ministry. In the second place, it was decided to exclude those in chaplaincies and work-related ministries, not because such people do not have a valuable contribution to make in assessing issues to do with theological education, but because the special requirements and environments of such ministries might have made for a different basis of judgment in answering some of the questions. In any scheme for evaluation or adaptation of the Church's provision of theological education, the most significant continuing requirement is always, at least according to current patterns, in relationship to the parochial ministry. Finally,

with the survey being conducted in the summer/ autumn of 2001, the latest past students to be consulted were those ordained in 1999 – on the basis that it is hard for anyone to comment on the quality of their training until they have had two years experience of actually doing the job for which they were trained. On this basis, the total number of inquiries made was 1845 and the number of returns received was 1007, a creditable 55% of the total.

A blank copy of the questionnaire sent is included overleaf. It was intended to allow respondents to give information about a number of issues in connection with their general feelings about their experience of training and self-confidence as a result of it, the pressures felt in connection with time, educational and churchmanship factors, and specific areas of curriculum input. The most obvious difference between the nature of the questions asked on this questionnaire and that sent to Bishops and supervisory clergy is that with the exception of question 18, there could be no attempt at obtaining comparative data between Courses and the residential Colleges.

Regional Theological Course survey
Dept. of Theology, Durham. July 2001

1. Name:

(please leave blank if you would prefer your response to be anonymous)

2. Present diocese:

3. Course trained on:

Dates attended:

4. Ministry pattern (tick one)

NSM only

NSM then Stipendiary

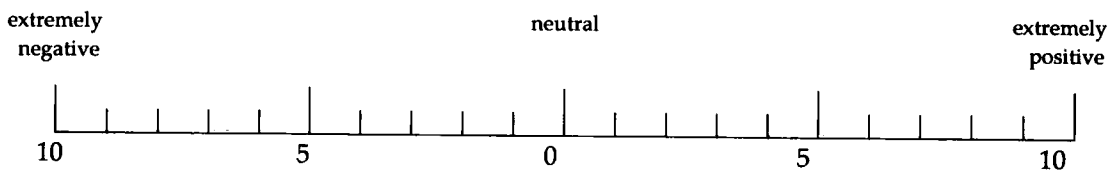
Stipendiary then NSM

Stipendiary only

5. Why did you opt for training on a Course as against at a College? (tick one)

- only form of training allowed by diocese
- personal financial reasons
- other family factors
- better related to personal needs
- other (please specify)

6. In hindsight what are your general feelings about your training experience?



(please mark with a cross at the relevant point)

7. What was the greatest strength of your training?

8. What was the greatest weakness?

9. When you started training, did you have any previous experience:

a) in teaching at any level? Yes/No

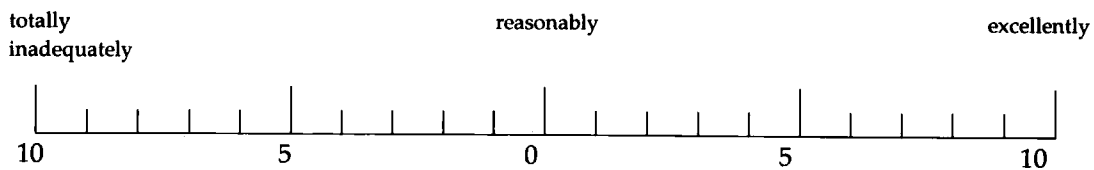
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b) in theology at further education level? Yes/No

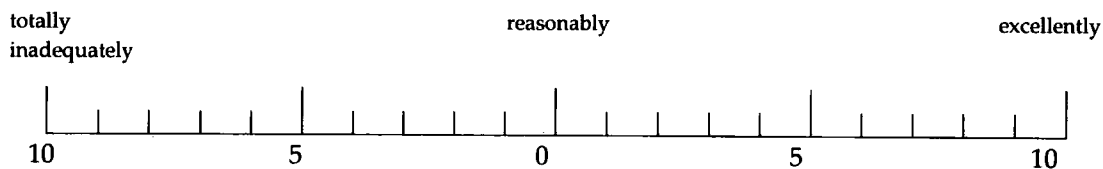
appropriate)

10. Relative to the needs of your subsequent ministry, how well did your training equip you in the following areas?

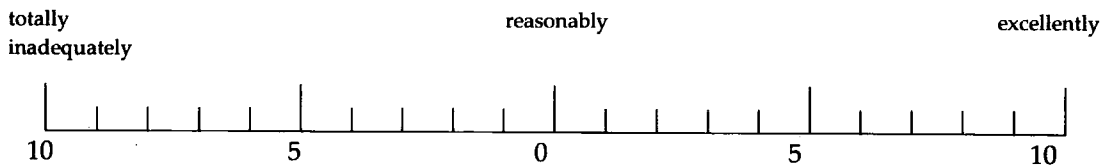
- In-depth knowledge of the Bible



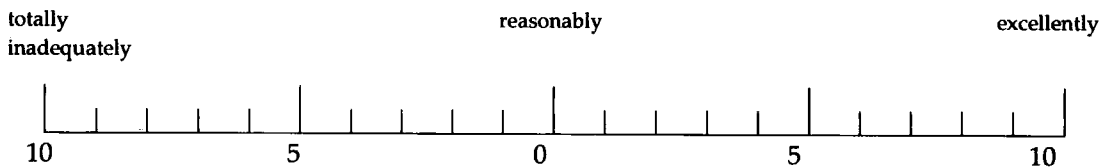
- Training in Mission awareness and skills



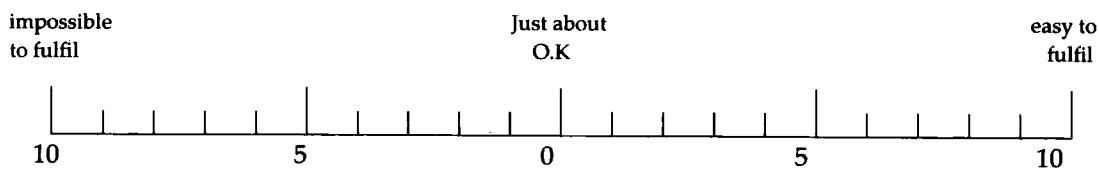
- Personal growth in the life of prayer



- General academic theology



11. How well were you able to cope with the demands of the Course time-wise?



far too basic about right far too advanced

10 5 0 5 10

(e.g. distance learning with follow-up tutorials, weekly lectures at a regional centre, etc.)

a) Course staff members

b) Visiting lecturers

c) Local tutor(s)

strongly threatened

supported but also shown the traditions of others

strongly supported

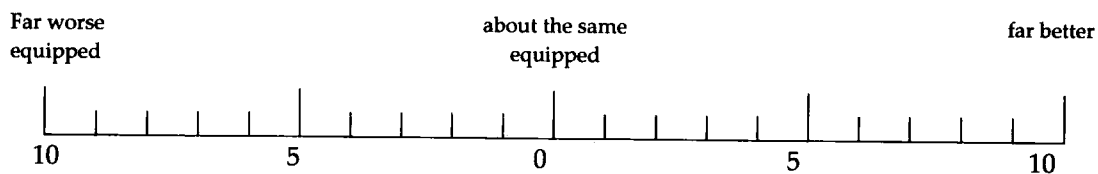
10 5 0 5 10

341

17. Did your Post-Ordination Training take specific account of your Course rather than College background?

Did it address any specific areas of weakness you felt in your course training?

18. Relative to colleagues who trained at College, how well equipped for your ministry do you feel?



Could you mention any particular factors important in this assessment?

19. Given your time again, which would you opt for, given the choice?

Course/College (delete as appropriate)

Why?

20. Could you make any further comments you may wish to include?

Thank you very much for your help.

Whereas the questions posed to the Bishops and supervisory clergy were phrased in such a way as to encourage them to differentiate between Regional Courses and Residential Colleges over specific issues, obviously this was not possible with the ex-students. However it was hoped that if similar issues and areas of the curriculum were evaluated, some definite patterns might emerge.

In order to assist with the calculation and presentation of results, all answers involving grid scales were recorded as being a positive (+) score if to the right of centre on the questionnaire grids and a (-) score if to the left. These details were not included on the printed questionnaires in an effort not to influence responses by what might have been interpreted as an element of prejudgment. The questionnaires were also grouped according to the Regional Courses they represented. In cases in which Courses have been or were in existence for more than a few years, the responses were also sorted by decade according to the year during which each student completed his or her training. The numbers of responses available for each Course/ decade varied quite widely. For instance there was only one response from a student who had attended the East Anglian Course during the 1970's as against 64 from the Northern Ordination Course during the 1990's. All 1007 responses received were taken into account when evaluating the Courses overall as a genre, but in drawing up comparative data between Courses, no calculations were made where there were fewer than eight responses due to the increased likelihood of distortion of overall averaging of data by the influence of individual respondents.

Just a few persons responding to the conduct of this whole project suggested that the collecting of opinions about theological training would not amount to analytical evaluation of practice. But the conduct of ministerial responsibilities and the effective discharge of them is a complex phenomenon. So-called 'success' must

be evaluated against the widely-differing spiritual needs exhibited by people in varying places. The Godly opinion of a bishop or priest of wisdom and standing about someone he has supervised is, therefore, a very important factor in judging the training and effectiveness of the said person in terms of the conduct of his or her duties. Not only that, but an individual's opinion about his or her own training can form an extremely useful tool in evaluation, assuming honesty in the response. It is certainly within the capacity of the average ordained member of the Church of England to assess to what extent, for example, he has been given the Biblical and theological background and insight to be able to at least place within a framework of understanding the practical issues and questions he is meeting in day-to-day parish life. Furthermore, an individual's opinion about his or her training can influence significant other issues in a person's ministry such as self-confidence and personal fulfilment, which can be crucial towards a sense of overall well-being, not to mention the influence over potential future students. No wonder increasingly in institutions of higher education, student opinions are sought regularly concerning the conduct of each course.

Given the above, question 6, 'In hindsight what are your general feelings about your training experience?' was deliberately chosen as the first inquiry to involve a quantified judgement. Overall, only a small minority gave a response with a high negative value to this, but table 14/1 shows the divergence of opinion between the various Courses. It is unfortunate that the highest rating (SAMTS 1980's, +7.5) comes from a Course which has been deliberately discontinued, whilst the lowest (CBDTI, +3.3) is from a course deliberately reconfigured during the same period, the early 1990's, in response to attempts by the central church

authorities to improve the training provision. Table 14/2 shows a league table of currently existing Courses based on the same question.

Student Survey: Course Comparison

Table 14/1

Question: 6 General feelings about the training experience.

Key: -10 = Extremely Negative
0 = Neutral
+10 = Extremely Positive

● = Current Course (2001)

CDTI 1990's	=	6.1	OMC 1980's	=	4.2
● CBDTI	=	3.3	OMC 1990's	=	6.1
NWOC	=	6.7	● SAOMC	=	5.7
NOC 1980's	=	5.2	OH 1980's	=	6.4
● NOC 1990's	=	5.6	OH 1990's	=	6.6
NEOC 1980's	=	3.6	● NTMTC	=	4.7
● NEOC 1990's	=	5.5			
WMMTC 1980's	=	7.0	SWMTC 1980's	=	5.9
● WMMTC 1990's	=	6.0	● SWMTC 1990's	=	6.1
EMMTC 1980's	=	6.5	SDMTS 1980's	=	5.2
● EMMTC 1990's	=	6.3	SDMTS 1990's	=	5.1
EAMTC 1980's	=	4.6	● STETS	=	5.4
● EAMTC 1990's	=	6.7	CSM 1980's	=	5.8
GLOUC 1980's	=	6.3	CSM 1990's	=	5.6
GLOUC 1990's	=	5.8	SOC 1970's	=	6.0
BRIS	=	4.6	SOC 1980's	=	6.8
● WEMTC	=	5.2	SOC 1990's	=	5.0
SAMTS 1980's	=	7.5	● SEITE	=	4.4
SAMTS 1990's	=	4.3			

Question 6: General feelings about training experience.

Position	Course	Rating
1	EAMTC	6.7
2	EMMTC	6.3
3	SWMTC	6.1
4	WMMTC	6.0
5	SAOMC	5.7
6	NOC	5.6
7	NEOC	5.5
8	STETS	5.4
9	WEMTC	5.2
10	NTMTC	4.7
11	SEITE	4.4
12	CBDTI	3.3

In terms of the 'secret of the success' of the St. Albans Course in the 1980's, a reading of the student responses yields a simple but powerful recipe. In the first place, there appears to have been a successful approach to the integration of academic theology with the experience of the 'real world'. Comments such as 'Constant cross references with experience'¹ and 'what was learned/ discovered on Monday evening could be put into practice (often) the next day'² were widespread. In the second place, there seems to have been a genuine appraisal of the teaching staff as of general high quality. That is not to say that comments were uniformly uncritical. One respondent, whilst citing Course staff members as giving 'really good teaching' and visiting lecturers as 'some excellent', wrote off her personal tutor as being 'a waste of time'.³ Nevertheless there was a wide appreciation of the high quality of many of the lecturers,⁴ and in this context the presence of visiting theologians from Oxford, Cambridge and London was noted.⁵ Other important factors were the broad background of students,⁶ coupled with strong fellowship⁷ and for some the opportunity to have had their vocation discerned during rather than before training⁸ (a pattern no longer available in the Church of England).

In contrast with the broad affirming comments recorded above, the problems cited with the bottom-of-the-league Carlisle and Blackburn Course make for sad

¹ Response A/80/6, question 7.

² Response A/80/9, question 7.

³ Response A/80/27, question 14.

⁴ Response A/80/10, question 7.

⁵ Response A/80/6, question 7.

⁶ Response A/80/5, question 7.

⁷ Response A/80/1, question 7.

⁸ Response A/80/8, accompanying note.

reading. Perhaps it is only fair to point out at the outset that a new Principal took office in 1999, in the academic year following the departure of the most recent survey respondents. Loneliness and isolation during the training process seems to have been a shared experience among students.⁹ Perhaps this is an inevitable feature of a small Course serving a very wide geographical area. However, one would have thought that a small number of students would have pointed towards the possibility of 'tailored' training packages. This seems not to have been the case, with 'lack of co-ordination between Course and "on-the ground" training. No account taken of previous experience/ qualifications.'¹⁰ Another respondent cited 'The slant against Evangelical Christianity both in the study, the book lists and the ethos',¹¹ adding that 'the Course needs to prepare all ordinands for the whole breadth of the C of E., not just liberal Catholicism. This is a foundational ethos issue.'¹² In looking for an explanation of these problems, one student focussed on an area which has been referred to as endemic in the small training institution, namely 'quality of Course largely dependent on Course Principal'.¹³ Another individual was bold to elaborate, 'I had what I recognised as a bad experience on the course with a threatened and vindictive Principal who was especially ill at ease with a well-connected assertive student who was open and honest about the Course's problems when Course Inspectors were around!'¹⁴

⁹ Response CB2, question 8.

¹⁰ Response CB5, question 8.

¹¹ Response CB6, question 8.

¹² Response CB6, question 16.

¹³ Response CB4, question 8.

¹⁴ Response CB1, question 20.

In the following pages, there are described the summary findings for the responses to the various questions on the student questionnaire. Whereas in the responses for Bishops and supervisory clergy one of the most obvious results of the survey is their agreement on the lower capability of the Courses to provide in-depth knowledge of the Bible and general academic Theology, this is not supported by the students in their overall ratings of curriculum areas cited in question 10. Table 14/3. gives the details. It seems that the students gave their Courses the highest rating for their delivery of general academic Theology, and the lowest rating for Mission awareness and skills. This is the exact opposite of the assessment of those who have subsequently been responsible for their supervision. It represents an extremely worrying lack of consistency in evaluation, when the bulk of Course-trained clergy and their supervisors differ so widely as to what has constituted strength and what has constituted weakness in their training. The probable explanation of the attitudes to academic Theology is that Course students are greatly appreciative of what a good introduction to theology they have received, but remain ignorant of what they do not know, which lack is unfortunately quite evident to others. A logical alternative, given the comparative nature of the Bishop's and supervisory clergy's figures, would be that the Courses *are* very good at teaching general academic theology when compared with other aspects of the curriculum, but that the residential Colleges are much better. Either solution raises very serious issues about contemporary theological education for ordinands, which are currently not being seriously addressed.

As to Mission awareness and skills, the likely explanation is that the very mode of training is respected by supervisors as enabling practical theological application on the part of the students. The students are themselves aware that,

having said this, there are significant weaknesses in training in specifics. This would be borne out by the interview with the Principal of NEOC, already mentioned, in which it was clearly stated that evangelism (usually accepted as one important component of mission) did not form a part of what was studied. The only logical alternative to this explanation for the relevant rating statistics would be that the Courses are poor in Mission awareness and skills, but that the Colleges are greatly poorer still. But although certain Colleges are sometimes reputed to be 'ivory towers', this is not the general sense of those making the comments. Perhaps it is simply the case that the Church of England does not know in any uniform sense what it means by Mission. But if the Church is to respond to Christ's call to make disciples of all nations, it must be unsatisfactory for Bishops to rate a mode of training as excelling in Mission Studies, when the students rate such studies as the worst part of the curriculum!

Question: 10 – Overall ratings of Courses by students

Total Responding	Key	Aggregate Ratings			
		Bible	Mission	Prayer	Theology
2	CDTI 1980's	13	3	15	11
18	CDTI 1990's	32	31	84	63
8	CBDTI	2	0	0	17
14	NWOC	65	59	74	76
57	NOC 1980's	139	84	208	208
64	NOC 1990's	109	178	221	202
18	NEOC 1980's	28	2	40	35
38	NEOC 1990's	18	37	46	45
8	WMMTC 1980's	30	27	11	22
42	WMMTC 1990's	79	112	104	142
4	EMMTC 1970's	15	18	13	20
35	EMMTC 1980's	71	74	156	79
35	EMMTC 1990's	66	86	123	168
1	EAMTC 1970's	7	6	9	5
21	EAMTC 1980's	29	-4	44	75
51	EAMTC 1990's	178	93	139	194
2	GLOUC 1970's	5	2	4	7
14	GLOUC 1980's	36	14	50	60
9	GLOUC 1990's	9	12	28	17
9	BRIS	19	-18	4	27
31	WEMTC	-26	19	96	60
3	SAMTS 1970's	0	3	0	0
30	SAMTS 1980's	71	139	101	114
10	SAMTS 1990's	-15	23	34	4
7	OMC 1970's	29	-4	16	39
22	OMC 1980's	73	-64	5	115
26	OMC 1990's	75	43	85	94
36	SAOMC	71	50	70	84

10	OH 1980's	65	21	23	56
14	OH 1990's	37	1	32	48
26	NTMTC	-32	71	85	57
4	E/T	15	11	18	20
8	SWMTC 1980's	19	5	13	28
32	SWMTC 1990's	69	90	112	184
33	SDMTS 1980's	71	34	120	131
62	SDMTS 1990's	16	126	348	125
42	STETS	58	119	159	155
17	CSM 1980's	71	-1	65	81
16	CSM 1990's	55	8	73	72
17	SOC 1970's	51	29	47	64
41	SOC 1980's	182	121	166	156
34	SOC 1990's	65	68	114	79
36	SEITE	35	74	40	77
1007	Totals	2005	1802	3195	3316
	Average	2.0	1.8	3.2	3.3
O/A = 2.6					

Question: 10 – Overall Numbers saying ‘less than reasonable’ i.e. negative ratings

Total Responding	Key	Numbers with negative Ratings			
		Bible	Mission	Prayer	Theology
2	CDTI 1980's	0	0	0	0
18	CDTI 1990's	3	5	1	1
8	CBDTI	2	3	2	1
14	NWOC	0	3	1	0
57	NOC 1980's	9	15	10	7
64	NOC 1990's	15	11	8	8
18	NEOC 1980's	5	10	4	5
38	NEOC 1990's	7	11	3	3
8	WMMTC 1980's	1	1	2	2
42	WMMTC 1990's	11	8	10	5
4	EMMTC 1970's	1	0	1	0
35	EMMTC 1980's	8	7	6	7
35	EMMTC 1990's	10	7	5	2
1	EAMTC 1970's	0	0	0	0
21	EAMTC 1980's	3	9	1	1
51	EAMTC 1990's	3	10	2	6
2	GLOUC 1970's	0	1	1	0
14	GLOUC 1980's	1	3	1	0
9	GLOUC 1990's	3	2	2	2
9	BRIS	2	6	4	1
31	WEMTC	16	10	3	8
3	SAMTS 1970's	0	0	0	0
30	SAMTS 1980's	6	2	6	5
10	SAMTS 1990's	5	3	1	2
7	OMC 1970's	0	3	2	1
22	OMC 1980's	3	14	8	1
26	OMC 1990's	2	6	6	3
36	SAOMC	6	8	8	6

10	OH 1980's	0	1	2	0
14	OH 1990's	3	5	2	2
26	NTMTC	15	5	4	6
4	E/T	1	1	0	0
8	SWMTC 1980's	1	1	1	1
32	SWMTC 1990's	3	5	5	0
33	SDMTS 1980's	7	12	4	2
62	SDMTS 1990's	25	16	0	8
42	STETS	11	5	4	5
17	CSM 1980's	0	7	2	1
16	CSM 1990's	1	7	3	1
17	SOC 1970's	2	4	2	2
41	SOC 1980's	6	7	6	5
34	SOC 1990's	9	8	4	9
36	SEITE	9	9	11	8
1007	Totals	215	251	148	127
	Average	21.4%	24.9%	14.7%	12.6%

In addition to the above consideration of individual areas of the curriculum relative to each other, there is another worrying discrepancy in the analysis of responses when it comes to the relative overall curriculum performance of the various Courses. Comparative analyses have already been given about how the supervisory clergy rate students from the different Courses. On the three different analyses used, CBDTI comes top of the league in each case. But in terms of student awareness, table 14/4 shows that Course to be resoundingly the lowest with regard to confidence in the curriculum. Conversely, a Course such as EMMTC which scored highest among the students on curriculum (table 14/4 again), was decidedly low in the evaluation of the supervisory clergy. Such large discrepancies point to either a total lack of uniformity of expectations about theological education across the Church of England, or a naive self-awareness on the part of Course-trained clergy about their own knowledge and skills. Neither gives great confidence in the ability of the clergy of the Church of England to act as effective shepherds to the nation whose name their Church bears.

Student Survey: League Table of All Courses based upon All Parts of Curriculum Investigated

Table 14/4

Question 10: Bible, Mission, Prayer, Theology, Considered Together.

Position	Course	Rating
1	NWOC	4.9
2	OH 1980's	4.1
3	SOC 1980's	3.8
4	<u>SWMTC 1990's</u>	3.6
5	SAMTS 1980's	3.5
6	CSM 1990's	3.3
7=	<u>EMMTC 1990's</u>	3.2
7=	CSM 1980's	3.2
9=	CDTI	2.9
9=	<u>EAMTC 1990's</u>	2.9
9=	GLOUC 1980's	2.9
9=	OMC 1990's	2.9
9=	<u>STETS</u>	2.9
14=	NOC 1980's	2.8
14=	<u>NOC 1990's</u>	2.8
14=	WMMTC 1980's	2.8
14=	SOC 1970's	2.8
18=	EMMTC 1980's	2.7
18=	SDMTS 1980's	2.7
20	<u>WMMTC 1990's</u>	2.6
21=	SDMTS 1990's	2.5
21=	<u>NEOC 1990's</u>	2.5
23	SOC 1990's	2.4
24	OH 1990's	2.1
25	SWMTC 1980's	2.0
26	<u>SAOMC</u>	1.9
27	GLOUC 1990's	1.8
28=	EAMTC 1980's	1.7
28=	<u>NTMTC</u>	1.7
30	<u>SEITE</u>	1.6
31=	NEOC 1980's	1.5
31=	OMC 1980's	1.5
33=	<u>WEMTC</u>	1.2
33=	SAMTS 1990's	1.2
35	BRIS	0.9
36	<u>CBDTI</u>	0.6

(underlining e.g. SAOMC = currently operating)

Mean rating of all respondents contributing to the above = 2.5

If the above comments perhaps raise more questions about contemporary ordination training than they answer, the student responses give a clear answer to one important question which is as to what is the main contributor to a theological student's general feelings about his or her Course in terms of a wide variety of factors. Table 14/5 is a summary of all the analyses to follow in more detail and shows the rating of currently active Courses related to the various issues in the questionnaire. The table is marked up to show both the bottom six Courses of the 'FEELINGS' analysis, and also the four Courses for which there were available the largest sample sizes. There is an exact equivalence with the response for question 10a, Bible, closely followed by questions 10d, Theology and 12, about educational ease or challenge. This is the case in both the set of Courses performing least well and those with the largest samples. This indicates that the greatest contribution to the 'feel good' factor for the Course student completing his or her training is the extent to which the individual is confident in a knowledge of the Bible. Perhaps this is no surprise, yet in an age in which the pressure seems always to be on the curriculum to include a yet further 'politically correct' issue, it should constitute an important reminder about priorities to those who would shape the ordination training of the future.

Question: To what are general feelings about the training experience most closely related?

Table 14/5

* = Sample Size

*		6. Feelings		10. Curriculum		11. Time Possibility		12. Educational Ease + = too advanced - = too easy		15. Churchmanship		18. Relationship to College	
52	1	EAMTC	6.7	SWMTC	3.6	WEMTC	3.9	NEOC	+0.5	EAMTC	1.4	NOC	3.5
35	2	EMMTC	6.3	EMMTC	3.2	SAOMC	3.4	EAMTC	+0.5	NTMTC	0.9	SWMTC	3.1
32	3	SWMTC	6.1	EAMTC	2.9	CBDTI	3.1	SAOMC	+0.5	SAOMC	0.8	STETS	2.9
42	4	WMMTC	6.0	STETS	2.9	NOC	3.1	SWMTC	+0.4	SEITE	0.6	NEOC	2.9
36	5	SAOMC	5.7	NOC	2.8	EMMTC	3.0	NOC	+0.4	WEMTC	0.5	WMMTC	2.8
64	6	NOC	5.6	WMMTC	2.6	EAMTC	2.7	WMMTC	+0.1	SWMTC	0.1	EAMTC	2.6
38	7	NEOC	5.5	NEOC	2.5	SEITE	2.7	STETS	0	EMMTC	0	NTMTC	2.4
42	8	STETS	5.4	SAOMC	1.9	NTMTC	2.5	EMMTC	-0.4	WMMTC	-0.1	WEMTC	2.4
31	9	WEMTC	5.2	NTMTC	1.7	SWMTC	2.5	CBDTI	-0.6	NEOC	-0.3	SAOMC	2.1
26	10	NTMTC	4.7	SEITE	1.6	WMMTC	2.0	WEMTC	-1.0	NOC	-0.4	EMMTC	2.0
36	11	SEITE	4.4	WEMTC	1.2	STETS	1.6	SEITE	-1.3	STETS	-0.4	SEITE	0.9
18	12	CBDTI	3.3	CBDTI	0.6	NEOC	0.7	NTMTC	-1.8	CBDTI	-1.4	CBDTI	0.6

Shows feelings related most closely a. to educational ease and b. to curriculum

	6. Feelings		10a Bible		10b. Mission		10c. Prayer		10d. Theology	
1	EAMTC	6.7	EAMTC	3.4	NOC	2.8	NEOC	4.0	SWMTC	5.8
2	EMMTC	6.3	SWMTC	2.2	SWMTC	2.8	STETS	3.8	EMMTC	4.8
3	SWMTC	6.1	SAOMC	2.0	STETS	2.8	NOC	3.5	EAMTC	3.7
4	WMMTC	6.0	WMMTC	1.9	WMMTC	2.7	EMMTC	3.5	STETS	3.7
5	SAOMC	5.7	EMMTC	1.9	NTMTC	2.7	SWMTC	3.5	WMMTC	3.4
6	NOC	5.6	NOC	1.7	EMMTC	2.5	WMMTC	3.4	NOC	3.2
7	NEOC	5.5	NEOC	1.7	SEITE	2.1	NTMTC	3.3	NEOC	3.2
8	STETS	5.4	STETS	1.4	EAMTC	1.8	WEMTC	3.1	SAOMC	2.3
9	WEMTC	5.2	SEITE	1.0	SAOMC	1.4	EAMTC	2.7	NTMTC	2.2
10	NTMTC	4.7	CBDTI	0.3	NEOC	1.2	SAOMC	1.9	CBDTI	2.1
11	SEITE	4.4	WEMTC	-0.8	WEMTC	0.6	SEITE	1.1	SEITE	2.1
12	CBDTI	3.3	NTMTC	-1.2	CBDTI	0	CBDTI	0	WEMTC	1.9

Within curriculum there is the best match overall with Biblical studies.

(exact in terms of top/ bottom and order of largest samples). This indicates that

STUDENTS WANT BIBLE KNOWLEDGE,

theology + educational challenge being the next factors.

Given the importance of in-depth knowledge of the Bible which has been demonstrated, the analysis of the results to question 10a are presented at Table 14/6. In terms of the league table of current courses, the top position of EAMTC must pay tribute to the quality of distance-learning materials produced by that Course in conjunction with the policy of careful choice of local tutor to match the individual student. The second position of SWMTC doubtless reflects the integrated nature of that Course with the Theology Department of the University of Exeter. Neither of these Courses, however, should be proud of their results when compared with the student rating of the Oak Hill Course of the 1980's. The latter's score of twice EAMTC and three times that of SWMTC shows what can be achieved when a Theological College is able to channel its resources and ethos into integrated extra-mural work. Students on the Oak Hill Course of the relevant period certainly cite this factor, one for example noting 'Rigorous Biblical Teaching' under the greatest strength.¹⁵ and another describing this as, 'It was delivered by, and at, a full-time theological college and gave full access to the staff and facilities of that college'.¹⁶ In turn the successor of the Oak Hill Course, NTMTC, would perhaps do well to evaluate reasons for their now being the lowest rated of the current Courses, following the deliberate change of ethos and organisation of the mid 1990's. Typical of comments for NTMTC was the following suggested improvement: 'More focus on biblical study and basic theology and less on 'trendy' let's all share our communal experience'.¹⁷ The low rating of another of the re-organised Courses, WEMTC, reflects lack of time spent on Biblical studies,¹⁸ shallow treatment of

¹⁵ Response OH/80/1, question 7.

¹⁶ Response OH/80/10, question 7.

¹⁷ Response NT/1, question 16.

¹⁸ Response W/13, question 8.

subjects, unqualified tutors and amateur educational method.¹⁹ The simple fact of reorganisation cannot, however, be maintained as a universal cause of deterioration in this area. SAOMC, for instance, scored much more highly than one of its predecessors, SAMTS in the 1990's. The last held the worst rating of any Course ever.

An overall trend in reduction of rating in Biblical Studies between the 1980's and 1990's, when considering all Courses together, is a cause for concern. On the questionnaire scales and using the figures in Table 14/6(i) as a basis, the average rating for the 1980's was 3.0 and for the 1990's, 1.4. The most likely explanation for this is a progressive shift in curriculum caused by the insistence of the central Church authorities on the inclusion of ever-more topical issues to the detriment of the fundamental basics, given fixed constraints on time.

The results for the curriculum area of General Academic Theology are set out in Table 14/7. The ratings are generally higher than for Biblical studies, and the differentiation between Courses on the league table follows a broadly similar pattern. There is still a wide difference between the most favourable and the worst evaluations. The comments for WEMTC previously cited apply equally to this area, in which the lowest current Course rating is maintained. The clear lead of SWMTC over EAMTC this time may indicate the value for general theology of interaction and debate in the lecture/ seminar setting of a university department, a facility not regularly available even in the best distance-learning programme. An analysis of responses for SWMTC for the 1990's yields comments which relate mainly to the high respect in which the main staff members were held by a very large proportion of the students, reference being made to their general academic competence, but also to their personal enthusiasm for, and dedication to, the task in hand.

¹⁹ Response W/5, question 8.

Question: 10 in-depth knowledge of the Bible

Key: -10 = Totally Inadequately
0 = Reasonably
+10 = Excellently

● = Current Course (2001)

CDTI 1990's	=	1.8	OMC 1980's	=	3.3
			OMC 1990's	=	2.9
● CBDTI	=	0.3			
NWOC	=	4.6	● SAOMC	=	2.0
NOC 1980's	=	2.4	OH 1980's	=	6.5
● NOC 1990's	=	1.7	OH 1990's	=	2.6
NEOC 1980's	=	1.6			
● NEOC 1990's	=	1.7	● NTMTC	=	-1.2
WMMTC 1980's	=	3.8			
● WMMTC 1990's	=	1.9	SWMTC 1980's	=	2.4
			● SWMTC 1990's	=	2.2
EMMTC 1980's	=	2.0	SDMTS 1980's	=	2.2
● EMMTC 1990's	=	1.9	SDMTS 1990's	=	0.3
EAMTC 1980's	=	1.4			
● EAMTC 1990's	=	3.4	● STETS	=	1.4
GLOUC 1980's	=	2.6	CSM 1980's	=	4.2
GLOUC 1990's	=	1.0	CSM 1990's	=	3.4
BRIS	=	2.1	SOC 1970's	=	3.0
			SOC 1980's	=	4.4
			SOC 1990's	=	1.9
● WEMTC	=	-0.8			
			● SEITE	=	1.0
SAMTS 1980's	=	2.4			
SAMTS 1990's	=	-1.5			

Question 10: In-depth knowledge of the Bible.

Position	Course	Rating
1	EAMTC	3.4
2	SWMTC	2.2
3	SAOMC	2.0
4=	EMMTC	1.9
4=	WMMTC	1.9
6=	NOC	1.7
6=	NEOC	1.7
8	STETS	1.4
9	SEITE	1.0
10	CBDTI	0.3
11	WEMTC	-0.8
12	NTMTC	-1.2

Question 10: general Academic Theology

Key: -10 = Totally Inadequately
0 = Reasonably
+10 = Excellently

● = Current Course (2001)

CDTI 1990's	=	3.5	OMC 1980's	=	5.2
● CBDTI	=	2.1	OMC 1990's	=	3.6
NWOC	=	5.4	● SAOMC	=	2.3
NOC 1980's	=	3.6	OH 1980's	=	5.6
● NOC 1990's	=	3.2	OH 1990's	=	3.4
NEOC 1980's	=	1.9	● NTMTC	=	2.2
● NEOC 1990's	=	3.2			
WMMTC 1980's	=	2.8	SWMTC 1980's	=	3.5
● WMMTC 1990's	=	3.4	● SWMTC 1990's	=	5.8
EMMTC 1980's	=	2.3	SDMTS 1980's	=	4.0
● EMMTC 1990's	=	4.8	SDMTS 1990's	=	2.0
EAMTC 1980's	=	3.6	● STETS	=	3.7
● EAMTC 1990's	=	3.7	CSM 1980's	=	4.8
GLOUC 1980's	=	4.3	CSM 1990's	=	4.5
GLOUC 1990's	=	1.9	SOC 1970's	=	3.8
BRIS	=	3.0	SOC 1980's	=	3.8
● WEMTC	=	1.9	SOC 1990's	=	2.3
SAMTS 1980's	=	3.8	● SEITE	=	2.1
SAMTS 1990's	=	0.4			

Question 10: General Academic Theology

Position	Course	Rating
1	SWMTC	5.8
2	EMMTC	4.8
3=	EAMTC	3.7
3=	STETS	3.7
5	WMMTC	3.4
6=	NOC	3.2
6=	NEOC	3.2
8	SAOMC	2.3
9	NTMTC	2.2
10=	CBDTI	2.1
10=	SEITE	2.1
12	WEMTC	1.9

Question 12 related to compatibility with educational needs, the third factor most closely related to general student feelings about training. Tables 14/8 shows the results. Their spread is not so wide as for the curriculum areas already considered, yet as has been shown there is a close relationship between this question and question 6. One Course, STETS, scored the ideal '0' as being neither too difficult generally, nor too easy, but just right. One student commented that 'commendable efforts were made to tailor it to my individual needs, thanks to local clergy taking an interest in my progress'.²⁰ It has already been noted, however, that there is a relationship between student satisfaction and an element of educational challenge. It should be noted that the top of the current league for question 6, EAMTC, also shared the highest 'too advanced' score for this question. By contrast, NTMTC scored the highest score in the direction of 'too basic', and also the greatest deviation from 0. This position relative to the other Courses corresponded with the lowest rating also for Biblical Studies. One respondent²¹ felt extremely positive about his overall training experience with NTMTC (question 6), rated it only slightly as too basic for him educationally (question 12), and would opt for training on a Course again (question 19). With no general 'bones to grind', he nevertheless wished to make the following pointed observation: 'The change from a College-based Course (Oak Hill MTC) to a Course run by the dioceses of London and Chelmsford showed how much better the former is. The inclination to use diocesan personnel as lecturers should in general be resisted if genuinely gifted teachers are available. Not to use the resources of the Oak Hill Staff was a criminal waste.' The issue of respect for staff has already been mentioned in connection with

²⁰ Response ST/4, question 12.

²¹ Response NT/3.

SWMTC. It would not be fair to point a finger at NTMTC in connection with staffing problems, but it may be that the NTMTC experience points to a more widespread general issue about Course staff, both core and visiting. The Church of England is fortunate in having no shortage of clergy and lay contacts with genuine academic interests. Even so, there must be a large element of differentiation between individuals when it comes to equipment for and competence in the teaching of up-to-date theology to today's ordinand body. Through personal loyalties, and / or institutional loyalties, it may be difficult for those with current responsibilities for theological education within the Church of England to take a step back and ask the essential question, 'Does the current structure and function of the Regional Theological Courses tend to result in the calibre of the bulk of their staff being second best?' It is certainly the case that by their regional and local nature, some of the Courses frequently have to work hard to find individuals to discharge individual teaching requirements, whereas a typical full-time teaching vacancy at a Theological College or in a University department might attract many well-qualified candidates.

Question 12: Compatibility with Educational Needs

Key: -10 = Far Too Basic

0 = About Right

+10 = Far Too Advanced

● = Current Course (2001)

CDTI 1990's	=	0.8	OMC 1980's	=	0.7
● CBDTI	=	-0.6	OMC 1990's	=	0.9
NWOC	=	0.3	● SAOMC	=	0.5
NOC 1980's	=	0.5	OH 1980's	=	2.4
● NOC 1990's	=	-0.4	OH 1990's	=	-0.2
NEOC 1980's	=	-0.6	● NTMTC	=	-1.8
● NEOC 1990's	=	0.5			
WMMTC 1980's	=	2.3	SWMTC 1980's	=	2.1
● WMMTC 1990's	=	0.1	● SWMTC 1990's	=	0.4
EMMTC 1980's	=	0.5	SDMTS 1980's	=	1.2
● EMMTC 1990's	=	-0.4	SDMTS 1990's	=	-0.6
EAMTC 1980's	=	-0.1	● STETS	=	0
● EAMTC 1990's	=	0.5	CSM 1980's	=	0
GLOUC 1980's	=	0.4	CSM 1990's	=	-0.1
GLOUC 1990's	=	1.0	SOC 1970's	=	0.5
BRIS	=	-0.6	SOC 1980's	=	0.7
● WEMTC	=	-1.0	SOC 1990's	=	-0.7
SAMTS 1980's	=	0.9	● SEITE	=	-1.3
SAMTS 1990's	=	-2.6			

Question 12: Compatibility With Educational Needs

Table Showing Deviations from the Ideal.

Position	Course	Deviation From “0” Rating	Rating (Note –ve = too basic +ve = too advanced)
1	STETS	0	0
2	WMMTC	0.1	+0.1
3=	NOC	0.4	+0.4
3=	SWMTC	0.4	+0.4
3=	EMMTC	0.4	-0.4
6=	NEOC	0.5	+0.5
6=	EAMTC	0.5	+0.5
6=	SAOMC	0.5	+0.5
9	CBDTI	0.6	-0.6
10	WEMTC	1.0	-1.0
11	SEITE	1.3	-1.3
12	NTMTC	1.8	-1.8

The question about how students coped with time in their Courses (question 11) did not elicit a pattern of response between the Courses which can be related closely to the other issues being investigated. The results are presented in Tables 14/9. The major surprise here, however, is that the average evaluation of each Current Course is on the 'easy' side of 'just about O.K.' Even the hardest Course in its demands on time (NEOC) had only 26% of respondents who rated the Course harder than 'just about O.K.' The explanation here is in the area of commitment and dedication of the ordinands concerned. For instance, one of the NEOC respondents²² answered question 11 as 'just about O.K.', but then went on in an accompanying letter to describe the Course as 'one of the most stressful periods I have ever experienced' and to say 'they had to be joking with the word "part-time"!'. Here the narrative rather than the grid score points to the truth and certainly accords with the observations of the supervisory clergy that lack of time and the creation of personal pressures is the second greatest disadvantage of the Regional Courses. However, the conclusion of the Church should not be that 'Course ordinands are subject to greater time pressures but are coping'. Rather there should be widespread concern not only at the personal and family pressures being caused, but more importantly at the lack of time for theological reflection and assimilation, so important in the formation for ministry. The writer was present at an evening of lectures at one of the Courses during which there was the opportunity for informal conversation with some of the students. It was clear that tiredness made it impossible to absorb everything from a class, but this was thought not to matter as unless there was an essay to be written, the subject matter would not be returned to again!

²² Response NE/90/1.

Question 11: Coping with the Demands of the Course Time-wise

Key: -10 = Impossible to fulfil
 0 = Just about O.K.
 +10 = Easy to fulfil

● = Current Course (2001)

CDTI 1990's	=	3.6	OMC 1980's	=	-0.3
● CBDTI	=	3.1	OMC 1990's	=	2.5
NWOC	=	1.3	● SAOMC	=	3.4
NOC 1980's	=	2.5	OH 1980's	=	1.4
● NOC 1990's	=	3.1	OH 1990's	=	2.4
NEOC 1980's	=	0.4	● NTMTC	=	2.5
● NEOC 1990's	=	0.7			
WMMTC 1980's	=	-0.3	SWMTC 1980's	=	4.3
● WMMTC 1990's	=	2.0	● SWMTC 1990's	=	2.5
EMMTC 1980's	=	2.5	SDMTS 1980's	=	2.7
● EMMTC 1990's	=	3.0	SDMTS 1990's	=	3.1
EAMTC 1980's	=	2.7	● STETS	=	1.6
● EAMTC 1990's	=	2.7	CSM 1980's	=	0.4
GLOUC 1980's	=	-0.1	CSM 1990's	=	3.0
GLOUC 1990's	=	1.4	SOC 1970's	=	1.2
BRIS	=	1.9	SOC 1980's	=	2.5
● WEMTC	=	3.9	SOC 1990's	=	2.9
SAMTS 1980's	=	3.3	● SEITE	=	2.7
SAMTS 1990's	=	2.7			

Question 11: Coping with the Demands of the Course Time-wise.

Position	Course	Rating
1	WEMTC	3.9
2	SAOMC	3.4
3=	CBDTI	3.1
3=	NOC	3.1
5	EMMTC	3.0
6=	EAMTC	2.7
6=	SEITE	2.7
8=	NTMTC	2.5
8=	SWMTC	2.5
10	WMMTC	2.0
11	STETS	1.6
12	NEOC	0.7

Having turned to issues of formation, mention can helpfully be made of the curriculum area of 'personal growth in the life of prayer'. Among all students the Courses were rated nearly as high in this inquiry as in Theology. This is in comparison with the opinion of Bishops and supervisory clergy that the Courses were marginally less effective in this area than the residential Colleges. The survey findings are recorded in Tables 14/10. Investigation of the top of the league NEOC yields no direct clue from the respondents as to why this should be so, yet apart from general feelings, this area of the Course was evaluated as best by its students. The other significant feature of NEOC, according to the survey, is the difficulty mentioned above of completing the required course-work within the time available. People setting out to design a training experience in which there is a good provision for the development of the life of prayer frequently seek to do so by immersing students in a particular pattern of prayer such as the Daily Office. Others might seek to enlarge the horizons of the student by arranging experience of worship within a number of different styles of spirituality. But the evidence from this question is that what helps growth in the life of prayer the most is the need to rely directly on God during a time of personal stress in achieving a training requirement which seems impossible humanly speaking. Many would flinch from deliberately organising hardship in order to improve prayer, yet it is important to distinguish between facility in techniques of prayer and facility in depth of prayer.

Question 10: Personal Growth in the Life of Prayer

Key: -10 = Totally Inadequately
 0 = Reasonably
 +10 = Excellently

● = Current Course (2001)

CDTI 1990's	=	4.7	OMC 1980's	=	0.2
● CBDTI	=	0	OMC 1990's	=	3.3
NWOC	=	5.3	● SAOMC	=	1.9
NOC 1980's	=	3.6	OH 1980's	=	2.3
● NOC 1990's	=	3.5	OH 1990's	=	2.3
NEOC 1980's	=	2.2	● NTMTC	=	3.3
● NEOC 1990's	=	4.0			
WMMTC 1980's	=	2.8	SWMTC 1980's	=	1.6
● WMMTC 1990's	=	3.4	● SWMTC 1990's	=	3.5
EMMTC 1980's	=	4.5	SDMTS 1980's	=	3.6
● EMMTC 1990's	=	3.5	SDMTS 1990's	=	5.6
EAMTC 1980's	=	2.1	● STETS	=	3.8
● EAMTC 1990's	=	2.7	CSM 1980's	=	3.8
GLOUC 1980's	=	3.6	CSM 1990's	=	4.6
GLOUC 1990's	=	3.1	SOC 1970's	=	2.8
BRIS	=	0.4	SOC 1980's	=	4.0
● WEMTC	=	3.1	SOC 1990's	=	3.4
SAMTS 1980's	=	3.4	● SEITE	=	1.1
SAMTS 1990's	=	3.4			

Question 10: Personal Growth in the Life of Prayer.

Position	Course	Rating
1	NEOC	4.0
2	STETS	3.8
3=	NOC	3.5
3=	EMMTC	3.5
3=	SWMTC	3.5
6	WMMTC	3.4
7	NTMTC	3.3
8	WEMTC	3.1
9	EAMTC	2.7
10	SAOMC	1.9
11	SEITE	1.1
12	CBDTI	0

The area of the curriculum in which the Courses are thought to outperform Colleges significantly, by Bishops and supervisory clergy, has been established as that of training in Mission awareness and skills. This was addressed in the survey in question 10(b). It has already been pointed out that it was the area of the curriculum voted least good overall by the ex-students. The suggestion, already made, that in general the Courses are light on addressing specific issues in missiology is born out by the answers received. In this case both the best and worst performers historically are no longer in existence. Best rated is SAMTS in the 1980's and worst OMC in the same period. Tables 14/11 illustrate the results. In a nutshell, the success of SAMTS is summed up in the words 'Experiential education methods'.²³ The same respondent commented also that the vision of that Course was 'far more liberal than the diocese it served'.²⁴ But the encouragement of personal reflection which this ethos brought seems to have been wholly positive. The need for clear reflection was partly pragmatic since discernment of vocation took place during rather than before training. The 'integration of life experience and theological reflection'²⁵ seems to have been integral to the ethos of SAMTS and discharged particularly well. The evaluation of effectiveness in training in Mission awareness and skills is not related to, say, the teaching of specific skills in evangelism, but rather to the praxis of connecting theology and the real world through an organised process of theological reflection. It could be asserted that SAMTS in the 1980's succeeded in doing what Bishops and supervising clergy wrongly impute to all Courses – not only doing theology in context, but positively relating that theology to that context through a

²³ Response A/80/16, question 7.

²⁴ Response A/80/16, question 8.

²⁵ Response A/80/14, question 7.

process of guided reflection. It is worth also noting the significant fact that the Course met twice weekly²⁶ for evenings of lectures and group-work, not once-weekly as is universal practice for gathered Courses now. OMC responses from the same period reveal, by contrast, a Course in which, 'its rigorous academic standards were not related or interpreted closely enough to what our initial (or later) experience of ordained ministry was likely to be'.²⁷ Evenly more succinctly put, its greatest weakness was 'practical application'²⁸ and 'no concern for mission'.²⁹ The Course delivery was through weekly lectures and even academic feedback was poor, let alone the lack of assistance with theological praxis already cited. One ex-student reported the following unacceptable performance of academic staff: 'The *average* length of time for an essay to be returned was in 1986/7 66 days, in 1987/8 79 days and in 1988/9 220 days, giving an overall *average* of 109 days. Some lecturers were very conscientious, returning essays the following week, so there appeared to be an incredibly "couldn't care less" attitude among the others.'³⁰ Taken as a pair, the St. Albans' and Oxford Courses of the 1980's illuminate forcibly the point that whilst some may think that Courses are better at training for mission simply because of the life context of the ordinands of the time, this is emphatically not the case. Courses like Colleges need to build in the application of academia to praxis if they are to succeed. But it is also possible for them to fail lamentably!

²⁶ Response A/80/14, question 13.

²⁷ Response 0/80/6, question 8.

²⁸ Response 0/80/1, question 8.

²⁹ Response 0/80/13, question 8.

³⁰ Response 0/80/20, question 8.

Question 10: Training in Mission Awareness and Skills

Key: -10 = Totally Inadequately
 0 = Reasonably
 +10 = Excellently

● = Current Course (2001)

CDTI 1990's	=	1.7	OMC 1980's	=	-2.9
● CBDTI	=	0	OMC 1990's	=	1.7
NWOC	=	4.2	● SAOMC	=	1.4
NOC 1980's	=	1.5	OH 1980's	=	2.1
● NOC 1990's	=	2.8	OH 1990's	=	0.1
NEOC 1980's	=	0.1	● NTMTC	=	2.7
● NEOC 1990's	=	1.2			
WMMTC 1980's	=	3.4	SWMTC 1980's	=	0.6
● WMMTC 1990's	=	2.7	● SWMTC 1990's	=	2.8
EMMTC 1980's	=	2.1	SDMTS 1980's	=	1.0
● EMMTC 1990's	=	2.5	SDMTS 1990's	=	2.0
EAMTC 1980's	=	-0.2	● STETS	=	2.8
● EAMTC 1990's	=	1.8	CSM 1980's	=	-0.1
GLOUC 1980's	=	1.0	CSM 1990's	=	0.5
GLOUC 1990's	=	1.3	SOC 1970's	=	1.7
BRIS	=	-2.0	SOC 1980's	=	3.0
● WEMTC	=	0.6	SOC 1990's	=	2.0
SAMTS 1980's	=	4.6	● SEITE	=	2.1
SAMTS 1990's	=	2.3			

Question 10: Training in Mission Awareness and Skills

Position	Course	Rating
1=	NOC	2.8
1=	SWMTC	2.8
1=	STETS	2.8
4=	WMMTC	2.7
4=	NTMTC	2.7
6	EMMTC	2.5
7	SEITE	2.1
8	EAMTC	1.8
9	SAOMC	1.4
10	NEOC	1.2
11	WEMTC	0.6
12	CBDTI	0

Because historically the Theological Colleges were founded each within a particular school or strand of churchmanship, whereas the Courses have all been required to serve all candidates from an area, the issue of churchmanship in relation to evaluation of the Courses cannot be avoided. In general, the largest single number of respondents across the board have felt the mixing of students of different backgrounds to have been a good thing, contributing to mutual understanding and respect across the breadth of the Church. However, there were also a significant minority of 100 respondents who found themselves especially encouraged in their own brand of churchmanship and a further significant minority of 43 who felt especially threatened. It was thus the experience of some 14% of the respondents that their Courses were supportive of a particular churchmanship rather than broadly encouraging. The Tables 14/12 analyse this situation in a self-explanatory way. Those who felt strongly supported comprised Liberal Catholics (22%), other Catholics (24%) and Central/ Middle (18%). Those who felt strongly threatened were largely Evangelicals (61%). It is obviously not the case that the Courses are wholly succeeding in their trust and it could be said to be unfair that there is likely to be a Central/ Liberal/ Catholic slant at the expense of Evangelicalism. As is perhaps inevitably the case, the feeling of support or otherwise by the student is heavily dependent upon the approach of individual members of staff. For instance one respondent recorded -7.5 for the first half of her studies and +7.5 in the second, due to staff changes,³¹ citing 'Inability (which looked much more like simple ignorance) of some staff and students to respect a tradition different from their own. A new principal who could work across traditions and sharpen thinking of all was a

³¹ Response ST/27, question 15.

marvellous relief. End of marginalisation!’³² Another respondent who felt particularly threatened said of visiting lecturers: ‘Some were good. Some were extreme with personal agendas with which they wanted to influence students aggressively’.³³ Even in the midst of threat, however, there was some positive help given, and a further respondent who felt strongly threatened in his churchmanship nevertheless was able in hindsight to report the greatest strength of his training as having been ‘the way the Course broadened my outlook though not only the ecumenical dimension but also the churchmanship and backgrounds of the students and staff.’³⁴ There is obviously a large difference between the different Courses in terms of the proportion of their students feeling particularly supported or threatened in churchmanship. Of those with no students who felt strongly threatened, NTMTC and EAMTC have a high proportion feeling strongly supported, whilst SAOMC tends much more towards ‘supported but also shown the tradition of others’.

Whilst for most students on Courses there has been a positive experience in the area of churchmanship, one thing that Courses cannot offer is a training in the distinctive practical competences associated with different ‘wings’ of the Church which together add to the richness of the whole Church of England. For instance, Evangelicals are often better at evangelism and Anglo-Catholics are often better at the provision of awe-inspiring, deeply symbolic worship. A training which embraces all, however supportive, will never produce practitioners in either area as expert as those who have been immersed in a tradition. It is a simple but not always evident truth that good Evangelicals and good Anglo-Catholics do not just appear

³² Response ST/27, question 8.

³³ Response ST/11, question 14(b).

³⁴ Response ST/12, questions 15 and 7.

but have to be trained, to espouse all that is best from their churchmanship as developed down the generations.

Question 15: Churchmanship Support

Key: -10 = Strongly Threatened

0 = Supported but also shown the traditions of others

+10 = Strongly Supported

● = Current Course (2001)

CDTI 1990's	=	1.9	OMC 1980's	=	1.7
● CBDTI	=	-1.4	OMC 1990's	=	1.7
NWOC	=	0.9	● SAOMC	=	0.8
NOC 1980's	=	0.7	OH 1980's	=	3.0
● NOC 1990's	=	-0.4	OH 1990's	=	2.1
NEOC 1980's	=	1.2	● NTMTC	=	0.9
● NEOC 1990's	=	-0.3			
WMMTC 1980's	=	1.3	SWMTC 1980's	=	1.0
● WMMTC 1990's	=	-0.1	● SWMTC 1990's	=	0.1
EMMTC 1980's	=	0.7	SDMTS 1980's	=	1.2
● EMMTC 1990's	=	0	SDMTS 1990's	=	0.7
EAMTC 1980's	=	0.5	● STETS	=	-0.4
● EAMTC 1990's	=	1.4	CSM 1980's	=	2.0
GLOUC 1980's	=	1.3	CSM 1990's	=	2.6
GLOUC 1990's	=	0.3	SOC 1970's	=	-0.4
BRIS	=	1.1	SOC 1980's	=	0.9
● WEMTC	=	0.5	SOC 1990's	=	1.4
SAMTS 1980's	=	1.3	● SEITE	=	0.6
SAMTS 1990's	=	0.4			

Question 15: Churchmanship Support. Proportion of respondents feeling particularly supported or threatened.

● = Current Course (2001)

		% Support +6 to +10	% Threat -6 to -10			% Support +6 to +10	% Threat -6 to -10
CDTI 1990's	=	11.1	0	OMC 1980's	=	22.7	0
				OMC 1990's	=	19.2	3.8
● CBDTI	=	0	12.5				
NWOC	=	14.3	0	● SAOMC	=	2.8	0
NOC 1980's	=	10.5	5.3	OH 1980's	=	30.0	10.0
● NOC 1990's	=	1.6	7.8	OH 1990's	=	10.7	0
NEOC 1980's	=	11.1	0	● NTMTC	=	15.4	0
● NEOC 1990's	=	3.1	7.9				
				SWMTC 1980's	=	12.5	12.5
WMMTC 1980's	=	12.5	0	● SWMTC 1990's	=	9.4	6.3
● WMMTC 1990's	=	2.4	4.8				
				SDMTS 1980's	=	12.1	3.0
EMMTC 1980's	=	14.3	2.9	SDMTS 1990's	=	11.3	6.5
● EMMTC 1990's	=	8.6	8.6				
				● STETS	=	4.8	14.3
EAMTC 1980's	=	0	0				
● EAMTC 1990's	=	11.8	0	CSM 1980's	=	23.5	5.9
				CSM 1990's	=	25.0	0
GLOUC 1980's	=	7.1	0				
GLOUC 1990's	=	0	0	SOC 1970's	=	5.9	5.9
				SOC 1980's	=	12.2	2.4
BRIS	=	22.2	0	SOC 1990's	=	8.8	8.8
● WEMTC	=	6.5	3.2	● SEITE	=	5.6	2.8
SAMTS 1980's	=	6.7	0				
SAMTS 1990's	=	0	10.0				

Question 15: Churchmanship Support

Position	Course	Rating
1	EAMTC	1.4
2	NTMTC	0.9
3	SAOMC	0.8
4	SEITE	0.6
5	WEMTC	0.5
6	SWMTC	0.1
7	EMMTC	0
8	WMMTC	-0.1
9	NEOC	-0.3
10=	NOC	-0.4
10=	STETS	-0.4
12	CBDTI	-1.4

Proportion of Respondents Feeling Particularly Supported (+6→)
or Threatened (-6→)

Supported			Threatened		
1	NTMTC	15.4%	1	STETS	14.3%
2	EAMTC	11.8%	2	CBDTI	12.5%
3	SWMTC	9.4%	3	EMMTC	8.6%
4	EMMTC	8.6%	4	NEOC	7.9%
5	WEMTC	6.5%	5	NOC	7.8%
6	SEITE	5.6%	6	SWMTC	6.3%
7	STETS	4.8%	7	WMMTC	4.8%
8	NEOC	3.1%	8	WEMTC	3.2%
9	SAOMC	2.8%	9	SEITE	2.8%
10	WMMTC	2.4%	10=	EAMTC	0%
11	NOC	1.6%	10=	NTMTC	0%
12	CBDTI	0%	10=	SAOMC	0%

Churchmanship of those feeling particularly supported by their Course

Table 14/12 (iv)

(rating +6 to +10)

Number	Individual Reference	Rating	Churchmanship
1	CD/80/2	10	-
2	CD/90/7	9	Middle → High
3	/17	8	Catholic
4	NW/3	6	Catholic
5	/12	6	Central
6	N/80/55	8	Catholic BCP
7	/39	10	Tending towards "low"
8	/47	8	Anglo-Catholic
9	/3	10	Liberal Catholic
10	/11	6	Central
11	/15	6	Sunny side of middle!
12	N/90/2	10	Liberal Catholic
13	NE/80/5	8	Catholic Anglican
14	/15	10	Liberal Catholic
15	NE/90/29	10	Liberal Catholic
16	/11	7	-
17	WM/80/3	8	Liberal/ Broad Church
18	WM/90/12	10	-
19	EM/70/4	9	-
20	EM/80/32	10	Central
21	/35	6	Liberal Catholic
22	/26	9	No Labels
23	/14	7	Middle of road
24	/22	7	Central
25	EM/90/28	8	Central
26	/9	10	Fairly Anglo-Catholic
27	/24	10	Liberal Central Catholic
28	EAMT/70/1	10	High
29	EA/90/33	8	Middle
30	/34	10	-
31	/40	6	Conservative Catholic
32	/2	7	Liberal
33	/5	10	-
34	/22	10	Liberal Catholic
35	B/4	6	"None"
36	/7	6	-
37	G/70/2	8	Liberal Catholic
38	G/80/5	8	Liberal Catholic
39	W/29	7	Catholic
40	/7	10	Middle of the Road
41	A/80/19	10	Liberal
42	/23	7	Catholic

43	O/70/4	8	Anglo-Catholic
44	O/80/1	9	Middle
45	/3	9	Liberal Catholic
46	/10	9	Broad-ecumenical
47	/16	7	Anglo-Catholic
48	/18	7	Anglo-Catholic
49	O/90/4	6	Mixture – basically Evangelical/ Charismatic
50	/6	8	Liberal Catholic
51	/8	10	Catholic Tradition (but experience Evangelical?)
52	/23	6	Anglican – Liberal – Catholic
53	/24	9	Middle of the road
54	AO/5	6	Evangelical
55	OH/80/5	10	Evangelical
56	/7	9	Open Evangelical
57	/9	9	Evangelical/ Charismatic
58	OH/90/3	10	Evangelical
59	/14	9	Evangelical
60	NT/4	8	Central
61	/9	7	Central Catholic Good Old Anglican
62	/19	9	Evangelical/ Charismatic
63	/26	7	Evangelical
64	ET/1	6	-
65	SW/80/2	9	Liberal Catholic
66	SW/90/4	8	Evangelical
67	/5	10	Evangelical
68	/12	10	Central
69	SD/80/28	8	Catholic/ Liberal
70	/13	9	Liberal Catholic
71	/17	8	Central
72	/21	8	Catholic (inclined to Anglo-)
73	SD/90/21	8	-
74	/31	10	Liberal
75	/35	6	Affirming Catholic
76	/41	10	Anglo Catholic
77	/43	10	-
78	/48	9	Catholic
79	/50	7	-
80	ST/16	7	Central
81	/20	7	Affirming Catholic
82	C/80/1	9	Open Catholic
83	/6	7	Liberal Catholic
84	/8	6	Catholic, Liberal
85	/16	10	Traditional Catholic
86	C/90/11	10	-
87	/12	9	Affirming Catholic

88	/13	6	Central → Liberal Catholic
89	/16	7	Liberal Catholic
90	S/70/14	6	Central
91	S/80/28	7	Liberal Catholic
92	/41	9	Liberal Catholic
93	/11	7	Catholic
94	/16	9	Liberal/ broad
95	/21	6	Anglo-Catholic
96	S/90/34	10	Liberal Catholic
97	/16	10	-
98	/22	10	<u>Not</u> fundamentalist evangelical
99	SE/9	7	Liberal/ radical
100	/16	6	Liberal Catholic
100 responses = 9.9%			
<u>All %</u>			
13 Unspecified			
10 Evangelical (5 at Oak Hill)			
22 Liberal Catholic			
24 Other Catholic (inc. Affirming)			
6 Liberal			
18 Central/ Middle			
7 Other			

Churchmanship of those feeling particularly threatened by their Course

Table 14/ 12 (v)

(rating -6 to -10)

Number	Individual Reference	Rating	Churchmanship
1	CBDT1/6	-10	Evangelical/ Charismatic
2	N/80/57	-10	Evangelical
3	/37	-8	Evangelical
4	/10	-7	-
5	N/90/59	-6	Evangelical
6	/36	-7	Conservative Evangelical
7	/45	-9	Open Evangelical
8	/11	-7	Open Evangelical
9	/22	-6	Evangelical/ Charismatic
10	NE/90/27	-8	Open Evangelical
11	/36	-6	Open Evangelical/ Charismatic
12	/3	-8	Open Evangelical
13	WM/90/30	-7	Anglo-Catholic
14	/37	-10	Anglo-Catholic
15	EM/80/27	-9	Modern Catholic
16	EM/90/15	-8	-
17	/18	-10	Charismatic Evangelical
18	/20	-7	Affirming Catholic
19	W/1	-10	Catholic
20	A/90/7	-8	Liberal Catholic
21	O/90/3	-6	Evangelical
22	OH/80/2	-8	Middle of the Road
23	SW/80/8	-10	Anglo-Catholic
24	SW/90/30	-7	Evangelical
25	/14	-8	Evangelical
26	SD/80/1	-7	Evangelical – Middle of the Road
27	SD/90/53	-9	Evangelical/ Charismatic
28	/56	-6	Evangelical
29	/12	-7	Evangelical
30	/28	-7	-
31	ST/34	-9	Anglo-Catholic
32	ST/35	-6	Anglo-Catholic
33	/41	-8	Anglo-Catholic
34	/11	-8	Evangelical Charismatic
35	/12	-10	Conservative Prayer Book
36	/19	-6	Evangelical
37	C/80/12	-7	Anglo-Catholic
38	S/70/1	-10	Evangelical
39	S/80/3	-8	Renewal
40	S/90/1	-6	Evangelical
41	/13	-8	Charismatic Evangelical
42	/15	-10	Open Evangelical
43	SE/15	-7	Charismatic/ Evangelical
43 responses = 4.3% of total received			
3 not specified			
26 Evangelical (7 charismatic)		60.5%	
11 Catholic (7 Anglo) (3 Modern/ Affirming/ Liberal)		25.6%	
1 Middle		2.3%	
2 other		4.7%	

One area of analysis of the student responses did not prove conclusive. From the survey forms it was possible to tell whether or not each person answering had had experience in teaching or theology, their sex and whether they had ever served in a stipendiary capacity. To see if these factors had any overall influence on the results, further analyses of the responses were undertaken for those Courses scoring highest and lowest for each of questions 6, 10a – d, 11 and 12, but this time differentiating between the responses, for example, of those who had had teaching experience and those who had not. There was not found to be any common pattern in the category analysis undertaken and the tables of findings are thus only included in the supplementary notes. What was significant, however, from these samples, was to note the very high proportion of students who were teachers (56 – 82%) and the high proportion of those who had either trained for stipendiary ministry or subsequently become stipendiary (32 – 55%).

Finally, given that all those approached will have worked alongside colleagues trained at Theological Colleges in some way following their training, the opportunity was taken to inquire of respondents how they rated their training relative to Colleges (question 18) and the hypothetical question of which mode they would choose, given their time again. The results are tabulated in Tables 14/13 and 14/4 respectively. They show that an overall average of about 16% of Course students feel themselves to have been less well trained than College students and a similar percentage would opt for College training ‘given their time again’. Although there is an overlap between these two groups, they are not co-terminus, since there were those who felt less well-trained but whose circumstances would not permit a collegiate training. There were also those who respect the differing merits of Course and College and did not consider themselves to have been trained in an inferior

way, but would have preferred to have been trained in a different way. It has to be said that these relatively small percentages, less than 1 in 6, represent an overwhelming vote of confidence in the Courses on the part of their students as a general mode of training – and especially when it is noted that more than 57% of all respondents felt themselves to be better trained than College colleagues. Again, what is of great concern is the disparity in evaluation between the Courses, whereby the average of 16% can mean as little as 6.3% or 8% in some cases, but as much as 37.5% or 50% in others.

Table 14/13 (i)

* = Sample Size

*		No. Less Well Equipped	Better	*		No. Less Well Equipped	Better
2	CDTI 1980's	= 0	-	7	OMC 1970's	= 1	2
18	CDTI 1990's	= 1	10	22	OMC 1980's	= 7	9
				26	OMC 1990's	= 1	17
8	CBDTI	= 4	3				
				36	SAOMC	= 6	19
14	NWOC	= 2	9				
				10	OH 1980's	= 2	5
57	NOC 1980's	= 6	33	14	OH 1990's	= 6	4
64	NOC 1990's	= 5	41				
				26	NTMTC	= 4	13
18	NEOC 1980's	= 3	12				
38	NEOC 1990's	= 4	23	4	E/T	= 1	2
				8	SWMTC 1980's	= -	5
8	WMMTC 1980's	= -	6	32	SWMTC 1990's	= 5	20
42	WMMTC 1990's	= 11	24				
4	EM 1970's	= -	3	33	SDMTS 1980's	= 7	15
35	EMMTC 1980's	= 6	21	62	SDMTS 1990's	= 8	36
35	EMMTC 1990's	= 9	19				
1	EA 1970's	= -	-	42	STETS	= 7	25
21	EAMTC 1980's	= 4	12				
51	EAMTC 1990's	= 8	25	17	CSM 1980's	= 1	14
2	GLOUC 1970's	= -	2	16	CSM 1990's	= 2	6
14	GLOUC 1980's	= 3	7				
9	GLOUC 1990's	= 5	3	17	SOC 1970's	= 2	13
				41	SOC 1980's	= 5	28
9	BRIS	= 1	6	34	SOC 1990's	= 2	21
31	WEMTC	= 4	19	36	SEITE	= 10	15
3	SA 1970's	= 1	2				
30	SAMTS 1980's	= 1	24	<hr/>			576
10	SAMTS 1990's	= 4	3	1007		159 =15.8%	=57.2%

Question 18: Equipment for ministry relative to those trained at Colleges

_____ = Current Course (2001)

% Worse ↓		% Better ↓	% Worse ↓		% Better ↓
6	CDTI 1990's	= 56	32	OMC 1980's	= 41
			4	OMC 1990's	= 65
50	CBDTI	= 38	17	SAOMC	= 53
14	NWOC	= 64	20	OH 1980's	= 50
11	NOC 1980's	= 58	43	OH 1990's	= 29
8	NOC 1990's	= 64	15	NTMTC	= 50
17	NEOC 1980's	= 67	0	SWMTC 1980's	= 63
11	NEOC 1990's	= 61	16	SWMTC 1990's	= 63
0	WMMTC 1980's	= 75	21	SDMTS 1980's	= 45
26	WMMTC 1990's	= 57	13	SDMTS 1990's	= 58
17	EMMTC 1980's	= 60	17	STETS	= 60
26	EMMTC 1990's	= 54	6	CSM 1980's	= 82
19	EAMTC 1980's	= 57	13	CSM 1990's	= 38
15	EAMTC 1990's	= 48	12	SOC 1970's	= 76
21	GLOUC 1980's	= 50	12	SOC 1980's	= 68
56	GLOUC 1990's	= 33	6	SOC 1990's	= 62
11	BRIS	= 67	28	SEITE	= 42
13	WEMTC	= 61			
3	SAMTS 1980's	= 80			
40	SAMTS 1990's	= 30			

Question 18: Equipment for Ministry relative to those trained at Colleges.

League based on Percentage of respondents feeling less well trained than College Colleagues.

Position	Course	% Feeling Less Well Trained than College Colleagues
1	NOC	8
2	NEOC	11
3	WEMTC	13
4=	EAMTC	15
4=	NTMTC	15
6	SWMTC	16
7=	SAOMC	17
7=	STETS	17
9=	WMMTC	26
9=	EMMTC	26
11	SEITE	28
12	CBDTI	50
		(Average overall Courses = 15.8%)

Question 19: Given your time again which would you opt for?

Key: Numbers saying 'College'

_____ = Current Course (2001)

* = Sample Size

*			Number	Percent	*			Number	Percent
2	CDTI 1980's	=	-	-	7	OMC 1970's	=	-	-
18	CDTI 1990's	=	1	5.6%	22	OMC 1980's	=	5	22.7%
8	CBDTI	=	3	37.5%	26	OMC 1990's	=	2	7.7%
14	NWOC	=	2	14.3%	36	SAOMC	=	9	25%
57	NOC 1980's	=	8	14.0%	10	OH 1980's	=	2	20%
64	NOC 1990's	=	7	10.9%	14	OH 1990's	=	3	21.4%
18	NEOC 1980's	=	1	5.6%	26	NTMTC	=	4	15.4%
38	NEOC 1990's	=	3	7.9%	4	E/T	=	-	-
8	WMMTC 1980's	=	2	25%	8	SWMTC 1980's	=	1	12.5%
42	WMMTC 1990's	=	10	23.8%	32	SWMTC 1990's	=	2	6.3%
4	EM 1970's	=	-	-	33	SDMTS 1980's	=	9	27.3%
35	EMMTC 1980's	=	6	17.1%	62	SDMTS 1990's	=	8	12.9%
35	EMMTC 1990's	=	4	11.4%	42	STETS	=	9	21.4%
1	EA 1970's	=	-	-	17	CSM 1980's	=	2	11.8%
21	EAMTC 1980's	=	1	4.8%	16	CSM 1990's	=	5	31.25%
51	EAMTC 1990's	=	8	15.7%	17	SOC 1970's	=	2	11.8%
2	G 1970's	=	1	[50%]	41	SOC 1980's	=	5	12.2%
14	GLOUC 1980's	=	5	35.7%	34	SOC 1990's	=	1	2.9%
9	GLOUC 1990's	=	3	33.3%	36	SEITE	=	5	13.9%
9	BRIS	=	3	33.3%					
31	WEMTC	=	11	35.5%					
3	SA 1970's	=	1	[33.3%]					
30	SAMTS 1980's	=	6	20.0%	1007			161	16.0%
10	SAMTS 1990's	=	1	10%					

Student Survey: League Table Showing Percentage of Students who Trained on Current Courses who would rather choose a residential College 'Given their time again'

Table 14/14 (ii)

Position in Order of Worst Performance	Course	% of Students Preferring College
1	CBDTI	37.5%
2	WEMTC	35.5%
3	SAOMC	25%
4	WMMTC	23.8%
5	STETS	21.4%
6	EAMTC	15.7%
7	NTMTC	15.4%
8	SEITE	13.9%
9	EMMTC	11.4%
10	NOC	10.9%
11	NEOC	7.9%
12	SWMTC	6.3%
		(Average Over All Courses = 16.0%)

From the evidence of the student survey overall, it is clear that the Regional Theological Courses are in the main doing a good job as far as their past students are able to evaluate them, both imparting good content within the time and mode available and engendering a sense of self-confidence.

Of the major issues to be resolved, one is curriculum-centred. It is that former students think they have been trained best in that area in which their supervisors and Bishops think they have been trained worst: correspondingly former students think they have been trained worst in just those areas where those responsible for their ministry think they have been trained best. Such uncoordinated understanding concerning the effectiveness of the Courses is potentially dangerous for the conduct of the ministry of the Church, and demands urgent efforts towards further understanding and insight if future discussions of the development of Courses are to be conducted in anything like an informed way.

The other major issue which needs to be addressed is the wide disparity in performance between the Courses in the various areas investigated. No one would pretend that the Theological Colleges all perform identically in all areas of what they do. Indeed many of their strengths are in their differences. But ordinands have a choice as to which one they attend. In only a tiny proportion of cases is there any choice of institution for Course candidates, and then only when by accident of geography a candidate's home is equidistant between two Course centres. Generally the choice is not between one of eleven Colleges and one of twelve Courses, but between one of eleven Colleges and a single Course. Given the already existing difference in pattern of Course delivery, varying between single-centre gatherings, regional-centre gatherings and distance learning, it should not prove impossible to improve the element of choice available. Choice encourages variety, which has

always been a strength of the Church of England. Choice also encourages improvement in performance, which in some quarters at least has been shown to be strongly desirable.

Chapter 15: Conclusions and Recommendations

The development of the network of Regional Theological Courses employed by the Church of England today for the training of its ministers has been a story both of common purpose and of variety of local circumstances. In the preceding chapters a large number of issues have been raised which relate both to the Courses generically and also to the individual institutions. There is a sense in which each chapter has included observations and conclusions, arising from the particular slant of its observation, together with either explicit or implicit recommendations as to further areas for adaptation in order the better to train the ordained ministry of the Church of England. Nevertheless, within the whole, and taking into account the wide research base, there are also pointers to a number of general conclusions and concerns that straddle the various avenues of approach which have been adopted and that are worthy of the attention of the Church overall as it seeks to plan the effective training of its ordained ministers at the start of the third millennium.

A small point worth making in the introduction of overall conclusions is the measure of agreement which has been perceived in relation to the viewpoints of people from different theological traditions. For instance, Anglo-Catholics and Evangelicals have found themselves together in not appreciating a predominantly Liberal approach to teaching, and in issues of how to encourage growth within traditions. But Liberals have joined with the others in lamenting the lack of time spent, for instance in Biblical studies. Although the reason for this is different (not enough time available for the critical issues), the resulting conclusion is the same.

Similarly, issues relating to the practical preparation of people for pastoral ministry seem to be appraised in common between the traditions.

Without doubt the most serious and significant worry which has been highlighted is the marked divergence between those who have experienced the Courses and those who have subsequently supervised them over the specific assessment of effectiveness in different areas of the curriculum. The need for systematic theological and educational evaluation of training highlighted in 1983 in GSMisc175, 'The Financing of Training' (see Chapter 6) still seems to be outstanding. At a time when the Church of England is poised to make decisions possibly to change the pattern of theological training yet again, it seems that the danger of making an uninformed decision or series of decisions is great. No one expects the newly ordained to speak with the wisdom of their supervisors, but nevertheless the diametrically-opposed assessment of strengths and weaknesses needs further investigation. It may perhaps be excused that of the four training areas investigated, the ex-students rated their training in General Academic Theology highest (see Chapter 14, table 14/3), whilst their Bishops rated this area lowest (see Question 7, Chapter 13). It is after all not unknown for people of any profession to overrate themselves in the early years in their general knowledge and ability, compared with a self-assessment in later life. The comparative rating of College-trained individuals by their supervisors as more adept, should, notwithstanding, be noted.

Within the diametrically-opposed assessment of strengths and weaknesses, it is that relating to Mission awareness and skills which is the more serious. Here the students believe themselves not to be well equipped whilst their supervisors believe them to be better equipped than their College equivalents, more so than in any of

the other disciplines investigated. It could be asserted simply that they are better than they think. But this would be facile. It has already been pointed out that Course students receive virtually no training in evangelism, whereas this is not the case in Colleges.¹ Furthermore there is no evidence to suggest that the decline in the Church of England is being turned into growth by the influence of Course-trained clergy! The notion of Mission has been at the heart of the Church of England's training validation scheme since the publication of ACCM 22. One problem is that mission is understood in different ways by different people. For instance, the Principal of NEOC has already been quoted as believing that mission is about inhabiting one's culture. Much influence has been felt in recent times from Professor D. Hardy in documents from ACCM 22 onwards, for whom 'mission is not so much a propagation in foreign parts as a theological discernment of God's Trinitarian action already operative in other people and contexts, in ways which cannot be predicted from the outside'.² The likely meaning of this dichotomy is that the hierarchy believe that Course ordinands can understand others better simply because they have remained in their work or domestic situation whilst training. But those thus trained are only too aware that having understood others, they have not been trained effectively to encourage them in a God-ward direction.

The recommendation about this area of concern is that diocesan Bishops should commit the Church of England to an understanding and policy of Mission which will have as a main objective the visible increase of the Kingdom of God through increased Church membership. The Ministry Division should be mandated

¹ See also the independent research conclusion to the same effect contained in Ian D. Bunting, *The Places to Train: A Survey of theological training in Britain*, (London, MARC Europe, 1990), p.55.

² Taken from 'The Orientation of STETS', a draft paper dated 5 March 1998, page 3, supplied by the Board of Mission.

to validate, and Bishops' Inspectors should be mandated to accept only those institutional courses of ordination training which include the prioritising of, consideration of, and practical training in, such forms of mission. One of the indices to success should be the confidence that students feel on completion of initial training, in being able to engage effectively in such activity. In addition research should be undertaken by the Ministry Division to establish further connections between effectiveness in mission on the part of the ordained and the related training input.

Mention of the need for a significant increase in training in Mission skills on the part of the Regional Courses immediately raises the question of their staffing and the potential ability of the staff to provide such training effectively and indeed to fulfil all the requirements placed upon them in the course of their appointments.

At the beginning of this research, the Church of England's Director of Ministry posed the question as to whether three staff can ever be as good as eight staff in delivery of all aspects of the curriculum. The figures related to Ministry Division approved levels of staffing for a notional Course and College each with a student body of 80. Within the Courses there exists a variety of ways in which core staff and students relate, from being principal teachers to writers of distance-learning materials to be tutored by others. But in every case the core staff are those responsible for the overall delivery of the curriculum and it just cannot be the case, other factors being equal, that three staff can embody the same breadth and depth of academic and professional knowledge, wisdom and experience, as eight. One of the factors involved in the proliferation of Courses as an alternative to Colleges has been the lower costs of teaching provision, and this is because of the Ministry Division's specification of what constitutes an adequate level of staffing. Of course

factors such as fewer contact hours between staff and students on Regional Courses need to be taken account of, but at the heart of the matter is the central Church's policy of providing a mode of training which is bound to be inferior. To paraphrase ACCM's Board of Theological Education Secretary writing on 1970 (see Chapter 2), 'Of course, if it does not matter about staffing levels, then let us reduce the College provision of staffing too'!

The recommendation in regard to staffing levels is that the Church should not seek to save money at the cost of reducing the range and depth of expertise available to students, but should redefine staffing levels so as to remove the differentiation between Courses and Colleges. Removal of this artificial disparity would enable far better appreciation of the real advantages and disadvantages between the different modes of training.

Of course the Courses augment their core staff with others, usually either specialist academics or local tutors. The last are most frequently local clergy and may act principally in a pastoral role or alternatively act as tutor for distance-learning and is dispersed-learning materials. Most local tutors are employed by Courses in which geography dictates a wide dispersion in the student body and consequent difficulty in attending local centres. The quality (or lack of it) of the local tutor can be described as the 'Achilles Heel' of the Regional Courses. The Carlisle Course history has highlighted the possible strength of having tutors from among the local clergy, but the early ones had relatively low academic qualifications. In the early period of Southwark, the term 'valueless' was even used on one occasion. EAMTC history includes the warning of over-expectation of the abilities of the local-tutor figure. SWMTC illustrates in its history the failure also to recognise the time taken to prepare for tutorship duties as being time not available

for parochial or other main responsibilities. Among the ranks of bought-in specialist academics, EMMTC history illustrates the use of agnostic staff and the St. Albans MTS a non-Christian. It is likely that the increased validation of Courses by independent academic institutions will result in greater consistency among local tutors. It is also inevitable that sometimes geographical factors may indicate the use of 'the best available' rather than 'the best possible'. Nevertheless it is recommended that there should be a common standard of achievement and aptitude for all tutors undertaking teaching duties, whether local in nature or on a regional basis. Justified criticisms of staff standards have been noted in Chapter 4, over facility in up-to-date adult education techniques and simple issues like the ability to control group discussion to contribute to the curriculum rather than diverge from it. Staff standards on Regional Courses is an issue for concern among certain Bishops and the student comment on the transition from the Oak Hill Course and College lecturers to NTMTC also sounds a warning. No-one would want to make generalisations about overall standards of teaching staff on the Regional Courses, but nevertheless the evidence points to teaching standards as an issue requiring monitoring and possibly legislation.

Given the reputed strength of the Regional Courses in training in contextualised theology, it might be assumed that their staff possess particular experience or expertise in this discipline. One of the notable features which has been demonstrated is that in fact the Principals have on average considerably less experience of being Vicar, Rector or Team Rector of parishes than is the case with their counterparts in the Theological Colleges. (see Chapter 5). It seems that the modern day leaders of Regional Courses have on average a paucity of of what to teach their students about effective local church leadership. Writing in GS583A,

'Non-Stipendiary Ministry in the Church of England', Mark Hodge quoted a then Director of Post Ordination Training as saying that Course staff had not worked and therefore did not know what they were talking about (Chapter 6). Today it is not clear that the leaders of Courses are greatly more competent about the mainstream parish based ministries for which their students are destined. It is recommended that significant experience of leading a growing church or the ability to demonstrate effective ministry in a related field should be a *sine qua non* for eligibility for Regional Course Principalship. It is likely also, although not specifically an issue for Regional Courses, that many of the personnel involved at Ministry Division with validation of 'Mission and Ministry' submissions, and many of those comprising the House of Bishops Inspectorate are also lacking in the experience of leadership of growing churches. If the Church of England is to reverse the continuing decline now being experienced, it is vital that the education of the next generation of clergy should be strongly influenced by those who have personal experience of parameters which result in church growth rather than church decline. Indeed, it could be the case that 'headhunting' among the leadership of the most strongly growing churches of today when it comes to clergy training appointments could be the best investment in tomorrow, affecting personnel, that the Church of England could possibly make.

Turning from who is doing the teaching on the Regional Courses, to what is taught, invites immediate attention to the widespread belief among both Bishops and Course Principals that Regional Theological Courses will never produce the next generation of theologians. One of the foundation axioms of EMMTC has been referred to in 'abandonment of the myth of coverage', and there is a widespread assumption that lack of coverage of the ground is balanced by the institution of a

regime of lifelong learning. And yet still it is not believed that Courses can produce theologians. The seeming incongruency of these statements is explained by the fallacy of the argument. Colleges are also able to instil an attitude of lifelong learning and yet are able initially to provide an experience of learning which is so much more comprehensive than the Courses, simply through the long-recognised fact (chapter 4) that three years' part-time Course training gives about the same specific curriculum time as half a two-year full-time equivalent. But why is it then thought that the Course regime is adequate for training ordinands? What is a parish minister if he is not a practitioner of theology? If a form of training is not capable of providing the basis for teaching pupils in a group, why is it thought that it will any better prepare people for the cure of souls in a parish?

When NOC still stood for 'covering the ground', it was branded as outmoded in attitude (chapter 7). But lack of coverage is exactly the problem for Regional Courses as a genre, and especially lack of coverage of central areas of knowledge such as Biblical Studies which are essential if anything like justice is to be done to areas of applied theology. The modern Principal of CBDTI is person who refers to 'scratching the surface' as describing the Regional Course endeavour. Inspectors of the St. Albans Course before its amalgamation into SAOMC were less kind when they observed what they described as 'groping in the dark after theology'! There is a proven paucity of input on Regional Courses in the key core areas of the curriculum and the system ignores the simple advice of Michael Ramsey in *The Christian Priest Today*³ that there is no substitute in ordination training for depth of study of theology. Nor is there evidence that Bishops'

³ Michael Ramsey, *The Christian Priest Today* (London, SPCK, Revised edition 1985), pp.101-102.

Inspectors give a high profile attention to the quality and quantity of basic theological studies.

Responsibility for the lack of basic theological content is not the direct responsibility of the Regional Courses themselves, but rather of those who specify curriculum parameters i.e. currently the Ministry Division. As long ago as 1982, the ACCM Annual Report highlighted the problem of new curricular requirements in the context of limited overall curriculum time on Courses. Not long after it was recorded that the Oak Hill Course had had to halve Biblical, doctrinal and ethics course components because of such new areas, which have elsewhere been described as 'fashionable' or 'politically correct.' Little wonder that one NOC Principal was moved to ask, 'Could ministry become all pastoral studies and no Gospel?' In the light of increasing competition for curricular time, the ACCM 22 decision to place primary responsibility for the shape of the curriculum with the individual training institutions can indeed be described as abrogation of responsibility. Although this has now in some measure been redressed by the introduction of training expectations, it is unsatisfactory that 'Mission and Ministry' is more centred on issues of personal growth in understanding of the various curricular areas by the ordinands, than in whether certain knowledge has been grasped or not. In an analogy with medicine, it is unlikely that becoming a surgeon will ever rest on progress rather than on actual knowledge and ability. Who can say that issues of eternal life and death, the area of practice of the minister, are deserving of lower standards? Although the early description of Southwark seminars (chapter 1) as 'exchange of opinions without much injection of knowledge', are less likely today, lesser preparation for 'day 1' of ordained ministry through the Regional Course route is still fact.

The recommendation in the light of the above is that Biblical Studies and Systematic Theology should be subject once again to a specific defined curriculum, and that Ministry Division and the House of Bishops should take responsibility for ensuring that this is accurately delivered. Furthermore, consideration should be given to increasing in initial training the proportion of curricular time that is given over to these areas. When proposals are received for the teaching of thematic or integrated studies, great care should be taken to ensure that no 'shortchanging' of the basic constituent disciplines takes place. To quote ACCM's one-time Theological Education Secretary, accurately this time, 'If it does not matter about quantity and length of time, then let us reduce the Theological Colleges' courses'!

A final area of curriculum teaching which must be mentioned as of concern is the approach of 'liberal' versus 'orthodox' from the point of view of the confessing Church. In chapter 4 the Secretary of the Theological Educational Training Committee himself was quoted as questioning whether Evangelicals and Anglo-Catholics can find a home in the Courses, and 'expert' students experienced on two different Courses a monochrome liberal view of scripture. Early on in NWOC (chapter 2), there was talk of 'cracking the defensive shells' of Anglo-Catholics and Evangelicals and this approach, perhaps now unwritten, is still widespread. One Course, NTMTC, complained of the association with Oak Hill College, in the minds of prospective students and observers, thought not to be of benefit. What appears not to be well understood is that the balance of traditions within the Church of England is not the same as a balance of traditions within the mind of a given student. Again, referring to the current numerical decline of the Church of England, it is said that the tradition showing least signs of growth in parishes appears to be contributing most to the raising of the next generation of

ministers. Most students of Courses, unlike those of Colleges, have no real choice in which they attend. It is essential that recognition should only be given to Courses which maintain a genuine balance of staff. Furthermore, inspection of the theological slant of the delivery of the curriculum should be mandatory to ensure the genuine encouragement and training of all traditions within each institution. If an imbalance is introduced, for instance through essential buying in of teaching from a university department over whose staffing a Course has no control, redress should be ensured from among those staff who are directly appointed.

An issue closely related to that of curriculum is of the relative standards of the various Regional Courses and of the qualifications which they offer. Chapter 14 has recorded very widely different student ratings of the individual institutions. All of them now offer qualifications subject to external academic validation and on the face of it the bulk of qualifications are within the Higher Education levels 2-4, most commonly level 2, but followed by level 4 or postgraduate standard. However, just as the emphasis for 'Mission and Ministry' is now the *progress* of the individual within various areas of theological engagement, it seems that increasingly the level of final qualification awarded relates more to the progress of the individual through the United Kingdom academic system than to the accumulation of progressive levels of knowledge and skills directly related to the work of the ordained minister. In this the disparity between M.A. qualifications has been especially pointed out. This can lead to confusion in the level of competence attained on the part of individuals who may at the end of their training hold apparently identical levels of qualification, and yet have varied greatly in the amount of theology they have actually studied. On more than one Course, modules are dual coded in terms of delivery with basic staff input being the same, at NTMTC, for levels 2 and 3, and in

the case of EMMTC for levels 2 and 4. There seems even to be a culture of competition between the different Courses to optimise their academic awards. The horror of one external examiner has been described in connection with a proposed programme leading to a B.Phil or M.Ed award, as being symptomatic of an erosion of academic standards. At the other end of the scale, creative Prior Learning Accreditation is often relied upon so that students can achieve their level 2 or level 3 awards, but that accreditation does not have to reflect formal theological study in every case. The recommendation is that the Church should have the courage to combat the erosion of qualification standards by specifying the quality of aggregated study of theology necessary in order to achieve theological qualifications at Diploma, Bachelors' and Masters' levels. To be an ordained minister is to be a practitioner of theology, and competence in theological substance, as against theological method, is crucial. Course-trained clergy may hold paper qualifications which appear the same as those of their College-trained counterparts, but the survey results indicate that in connection with qualification for posts of senior responsibilities, the observations of their supervisors are salutary!

If the major conclusion concerning Regional Courses is that there is a problem with breadth and depth of academic theological content, another is that there is an additional problem with their ability to train ordinands to engage effectively in a wide variety of ministerial situations in response to the needs of the Church. This problem has been highlighted not only by Bishops and Supervisory clergy, but also by Course Principals. The reason for the problem is wholly the lack of time during training for experiencing significant pastoral situations in contrast with the environment of the 'home church.' Principals have described the result as 'congregationalism' and 'inappropriate individualism.' Bishops have called it

'parochialism', 'inflexibility,' 'pursuit of own needs' and the 'moulding of ministry in one's own image'. Supervising clergy add the descriptions, 'maverick attitude to ministry' and the most helpful, ' "my ministry" syndrome'. When this is added to the evidence gathered about low levels of training provided in practical aspects of ministry such as preaching technique and understanding funeral services, the picture is built of a simple lack of time available to appreciate and learn about a variety of ministries. Where a candidate stays at home for training the inevitable narrowness of the home church creates a need for more, not less, alternative experience. Building on comments previously made, the recommendation can only be made that Regional Course training should be extended in length so that it is possible to provide increased placement contact and training in practical matters of ministry, when compared with the residential equivalent. At the moment Regional Course training is weak where it claims to be strong, in the praxis of ministry.

If the above conclusions point to the need for increased content in Regional Course training, that is true. But it is also true that there is already a problem because of lack of time on the part of students to do nothing – but reflect. Sophisticated documents, which are submitted for the purposes of academic validation typically include many details about contact hours and private study hours. But these cannot allow for such factors as physical and emotional tiredness, which can cause a lack of engagement with such curriculum as there is. Time on top of the formally specified curriculum to reflect and assimilate is virtually unavailable and is recognised widely as a real problem. Without time to reflect, academic input stands a much greater chance of non-assimilation. Indeed on a random visit to just one night of tuition on one of the Courses, several students were talking of tiredness. More worryingly, they were also expressing the sentiment that

the consequent non-absorption of the night's topic did not matter, because they would never need to come back to it again. If this is a widespread feature of student reaction, it is greatly alarming since instant forgetting is the very opposite of that culture of life-long learning which it is axiomatic that the Regional Courses must instil in order to make up for their lack of tuition and general academic contact time. It was just this lack of time for absorption and reflection which caused the educational expert, cited in Chapter 4, to deny that the 'doing of theology in context' represented anything more than jargon in the absence of any real time for thoughtful application of theological principles locally. In Chapter 1, Bishop John Robinson was quoted as speaking of the benefits of the Southwark Course as including 'the training of men without taking them out of the world'. This is still widely thought of as a major strength of Regional Courses. One fallacy is to think that people going away to College always instantly forget all of their life experience up to that point. Another is to think that just being in a context is the same as having time to reflect about it.

Another destructive aspect of the busyness inculcated by the Regional Courses is in the area of family life. Again the lack of need to uproot a family to go away for training has been frequently cited as perhaps the most obvious benefit of the Regional Courses. Yet from the early days some have recognised (e.g. see Chapter 1) that extreme busyness can cause more family stress than moving. Today (e.g. among the Bishops) there is less certainty where the family advantages lie, especially in connection with training for the stipendiary ministry. There is often a more difficult settling in process for the family at the beginning of a stipendiary appointment when training has been part-time, than is otherwise the case. A specific recommendation here is that the criteria for selection for training should be adapted

or expanded to include the idea of renunciation as an aspect of vocation. It may well be that a candidate should train on a Regional Course for sound theological or practical reasons. But the simple unwillingness to give up money may be acting as a bar to some to a more holistic training process.

A third aspect of the problem of lack of time is in connection with the life of prayer. One Bishop (chapter 12) thought that busyness during training was in itself good preparation for the pressures of parish life. Mention has been made of the possible development of a pattern of prayer that is sustainable in everyday life. But the testimony from the Courses (chapter 5) is that no Course can immerse a Student in a pattern of prayer. The deepening of the life of prayer is widely recognised as being an essential aspect of ordination training, but arguably Regional Courses train for that prayer which can be fitted in. This is in contrast to the ideal, some would say the essential, pattern, namely that the rest of ministry and everyday life is fitted in once the prayer has been completed.

The recommendation is that ordination training on Regional Courses should be extended in order to make more time available so that there can be a genuine equivalence between what is offered and the full-time alternative. The length of Regional Course training could be extended if those responsible were willing to bear the cost.

Distinct from the issues highlighted above is the further issue of who holds authority within training. This is important because of the consequent curricular emphasis in terms of theological approach. Under the history of NOC (chapter 7), it was pointed out that twenty years ago, the relatively low and decreasing profile of Anglican theology on university courses was of concern to Course and College Principals alike. Today there has been a high increase in ecumenical involvement.

There has also been a widespread cutting of ties with Dioceses in order for the Regional Courses to become self-determining, and a growth in connections with university institutions which validate academic courses.

In the case of SWMTC, it has been demonstrated that the close link with Exeter University has also been characterised by a syllabus mismatch between university teaching on offer and the ideal Course requirements. More pointedly, reference has been made (chapter 9) to the 'absolute control' exerted by the university over the academic syllabus for EMMTC. The predominance of 'liberal' theology in Course content has been noted. Then answerability of Courses to a number of validating and sponsoring institutions will tend to encourage a theological approach reflecting a 'common denominator'. Training in such an environment for competence in establishing radical Christian discipleship may be hard, as may any attempts to establish such a practice in the face of current procedures. Another facet of the issue is the now established emphasis on personal growth of the individual ordinand, in line with principles of liberal secular education, which it has been argued mitigates against the achievement of more absolute standards of professional knowledge and competence.

One of the reasons behind the secularisation of clergy training is that the many people who contribute to the government and planning of Regional Courses, and who are consulted in connection with proposed change, are those who have an interest in the processes of education rather than those who have demonstrated the knowledge and skills related to building the Church, rather than talking about faith. Cranmer is interpreted as having wanted the Bishops of the Church of England to train their ordinands at cathedral seminaries. Today it is recommended that there should be a culture shift in training so that those who have demonstrated

effectiveness in ministry can join those with expertise in education in specifying what takes place.

In summing up, a final quotation concerning training seems apt:

We trained hard, but every time we began to form into units we would be reorganised. I learnt later in life that we meet new situations by reorganising and that reorganisation is a wonderful method of creating the illusion of progress, while producing confusion, inefficiency and demoralisation.⁴

The story of the Regional Theological Courses is one of commitment and innovation on the part of very many people, who together have produced a national network of training institutions which have grown very much in their capacity from their inception in the 1960's and 1970's until now. From a time when not all candidates were seen as other than 'stop gap' people preparing for a 'stop-gap' ministry, there has been such a growth that many would even assert that Regional Courses are more effective than the Colleges in training for the ordained ministry. Nevertheless, within the pattern of helpful change and development there has been very much wasted time and effort directed towards proposing, and opposing, unnecessary change. In this the ACCM 30 – Lincoln – Hereford cycle of reports has had a large part to play. Examples have been cited of acrimony between the 'regions' and the 'centre' and of personal stress caused by uncertainty arising from this.

Whilst recognising that there has been for some time a culture of change in secular education and that we live in a rapidly changing society, the time has come in ordination training to reflect upon the unchanging nature of the Gospel. The

⁴ A reference wrongly attributed to Petronius, concerning the army of Rome, but almost certainly the work of an anonymous twentieth century author. Its frequent use reflects widespread concerns about issues of 'progress' in many organisations over the last fifty years. See web-site http://www.people.memphis.edu/~mhooker/petronius_quote.html

‘draft Hind’ report cited in its terms of reference at the beginning of 2002 ‘an appetite for radical change’,⁵ in contrast with the ‘limited reviews of the early 1990’s’. These reviews of the early 1990’s were to do with the structure of theological education provision, but not fundamentally the content of what was being taught. It is crucial that in any further decisions the Church makes concerning the Regional Courses, there is a willingness to address the actual weaknesses rather than engage in yet more structural changes which may leave those actual weaknesses untouched.

It is not true that the Regional Courses offer equal but different training from the Theological Colleges. They offer training which is cheaper than the Colleges because of the lack of residence and the lack of content. The assertion in the early days of Southwark (chapter 1), that such a pattern saves money at the expense of both employer and student, is equally true today. Of course, in the case of the Non-Stipendiary Ministry, the Courses offer that part-time mode of training which is essential. The combination of lack of time and lack of content gives, as Mantle asserts, a different training which produces a different ministry. What the Church aspires to however is a training mode which is equivalent to that of the Colleges, with perhaps complementary strengths and weaknesses. Instead, the Bishop of Carlisle is correct when he says,⁶ ‘Residential training enables more in-depth focus on everything.’ Good as the Regional Courses are, and successful as their development has been, the Church needs to grasp the nettle of their non-equivalence with residential training.

⁵ Church of England individual title, “The structure and funding of ordination training”, 2002, p.1.

⁶ Survey return, section 4.

Grasping the nettle of non-equivalence gives two possible ways forward. Firstly, the Church could retain the Courses in their present broad format and take note of the differential with Colleges in deploying those ordained by that route. Whilst there will always be individual exceptions, in general Course-trained clergy have studied significantly less academic theology and practical theology and have experienced significantly less pastoral experience and training than their College counterparts, and should be deployed accordingly.

The more positive and constructive way forward would be to recognise the identified Course disparity and take action to rectify the situation in order to obtain a genuine equivalence. This would involve the abandonment of the expectation that the same training can be bought cheaper. The duration of Course training could be lengthened and if at the same time the profile of studies were weighted towards the area of Biblical Studies and Doctrine, some equivalence in these areas might be achieved. If the early post-ordination years were to be reconfigured to include further studies weighted towards applied theology then it might be possible to achieve not only more effective overall parity in training content, but also a situation whereby the Courses might be able to field genuine strengths. Four years of part-time studies at the present level, plus a further two years of compulsory taught curriculum on an 'in-service' basis, might not delight the Church's budgeters, nor might it delight prospective ordinands. But it might produce a training pattern and a consequent ministry which would be genuinely 'first rate.'

Of course, if it does not matter about quantity and the length of time, then let us reduce the theological college courses!⁷

The provision of a properly trained and supported ministry is critical to the Church's mission.⁸

⁷ Correspondence from ACCM's Board of Theological Education Secretary, dated 23 March 1970, in C. of E. Records Office file ACCM/COLL/COU/SWO.

⁸ *Church of England Year Book 2001*, p.35.

Summary of Recommendations

1. Diocesan Bishops should commit the Church of England to an understanding and policy of Mission which will have as a main objective the visible increase of the Kingdom of God through increased Church membership. The Ministry Division should be mandated to validate, and Bishops' Inspectors should be mandated to accept, only those institutional courses of ordination training which include the prioritising of, consideration of, and practical training in, such forms of mission. One of the indices to success should be the confidence that students feel, on completion of initial training, in being able to engage effectively in such activity. In addition research should be undertaken by the Ministry Division to establish further connections between effectiveness in mission in observable church and ministry situations and related training input.
2. The Church should not seek to save money at the cost of reducing the range and depth of expertise available to students, but should redefine staffing levels so as to remove the differential between Courses and Colleges.
3. There should be a common standard of achievement and aptitude for all tutors undertaking teaching duties on Courses, whether on a local or regional base. Teaching standards should be more fully monitored and possibly subjected to appropriately defined legislation.

4. Significant experience of leading a growing church or the ability to demonstrate effective ministry in a related field should be a *sine qua non* when it comes to eligibility for Regional Course Principalship.
5. The staff of Ministry Division and members of the House of Bishops' Inspectorate who relate to the Regional Courses should have personal experience of the parameters which result in church growth rather than church decline.
6. 'Headhunting' among the leadership of the most strongly growing churches should be considered when making clergy training appointments generally.
7. Biblical Studies and Systematic Theology should be subject once again to a specific defined curriculum. Ministry Division and the House of Bishops should take responsibility for ensuring that this is accurately delivered. Consideration should be given to increasing the proportion of curriculum time that is given over to these areas.

When proposals are received for the teaching of thematic or integrated studies, great care should be taken to ensure that no "shortchanging" of the basic constituent disciplines takes place.

8. As to the differing theological traditions within the Church of England, recognition should only be given to Courses which maintain a genuine balance of staff. Inspection of the theological slant of the curriculum delivery should be mandatory to ensure the genuine encouragement and training of all traditions

within each institution. If imbalance is introduced, for example through essential buying-in of teaching from a university department over whose staffing a Course has no control, redress should be ensured from among those staff who are directly appointed.

9. The Church should have the courage to combat the erosion of qualification standards by specifying the quantity of aggregated study of theology necessary in order to achieve theological qualifications at Diploma, Bachelor's and Master's levels.
10. Course training should be extended in length so that it is possible to provide increased placement contact and training in the praxis of ministry.
11. Criteria for selection for training should be adapted or expanded to include the idea of renunciation as an aspect of vocation.
12. Ordination training on Regional Courses should be extended in order to make more time available for prayer, reflection and academic teaching so that there can be a genuine equivalence between what is offered and the full-time alternative. This involves willingness to bear increased costs.
13. There should be a culture shift in training so that those who have demonstrated effectiveness in ministry can join those with expertise in education in specifying what takes place.

14. The time has come in ordination training to reflect with higher profile the unchanging nature of the Gospel. It is crucial that in any further decisions the Church makes concerning the Regional Courses, there is a willingness to address the actual weaknesses rather than engage in yet more structural changes which may leave those actual weaknesses untouched.

